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**Linguistic  
interferences: a  
diachronic  
analysis of Latin  
influence on Old  
High German  
vocabulary and  
syntax, with a  
didactic  
application**

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## ABSTRACT

Unter Berücksichtigung der Sprachreinheit kann man ganz einfach beobachten, dass Sprachen nie rein sein können, da sie ständig von anderen beeinflusst sind und werden. Tatsächlich verändern sich Sprachen im Laufe der Zeit: Infolgedessen spricht man von Sprachen im Wandel.

Eine der wichtigsten Arten der Erweiterung des Wortschatzes einer Sprache ist die Entlehnung von Wörtern aus fremden Sprachen. Keine Sprache ist völlig frei von solchen Entlehnungen, demzufolge auch die deutsche Sprache nicht.

Die Geschichte der deutschen Sprache ist wesentlich gezeichnet von der Ablösung des Lateinischen durch die Volkssprache, bzw. das Althochdeutsch: es beginnt mit dem Einsetzen der ältesten Überlieferung und markiert den Beginn eines langsamen, Jahrhunderte dauernden Prozess der Ablösung des Lateinischen als erste Schriftsprache in Europa.

Wenn wir also heute von Althochdeutsch sprechen, dann betonen wir damit die durch die lateinische Schrift und die Merkmale der Lautverschiebung entstandenen Gemeinsamkeiten, die am Anfang der Entwicklung der heutigen deutschen Schriftsprache stehen.

Diese Magisterarbeit hat das Ziel, die linguistische Beziehungen zwischen Römern und Germanen in der althochdeutschen Zeit auszuwerten. Insbesondere betrachtet sie den lexikalischen und syntaktischen Einfluss des Lateins auf Althochdeutsch.

Um eine Untersuchung solcher linguistischen Beziehungen bereitzustellen, hält das erste Kapitel den Ursprung der deutschen Sprachgeschichte und ihre Entwicklung fest. Die Entwicklung einer Sprache ist ein Kontinuum. Deshalb gibt es zahlreiche Versuche, dieses in Perioden zu untergliedern. Infolgedessen weist das erste Unterkapitel die Auffassung von deutscher Sprache und den Ursprung des Begriffs ‚deutsch‘ auf.

Das zweite Unterkapitel beschäftigt sich mit der Periodisierung der Entwicklung der deutschen Sprache und besonders des Althochdeutschen.

Bevor man sich auf die deutsche Sprache konzentriert, ist es notwendig ein theoretisches Gerüst über die Entwicklung und die Veränderung einer Sprache zu machen. Dieser Abschnitt befasst sich daher auch mit dem Thema der Eigenschaften einer Sprache, insbesondere ihr sozialer Charakter und ihrer endlosen Veränderung. In Bezug daraufhin sind verschieden Typen von Sprachwandel zu unterscheiden: Diese Arbeit analysiert aber nur die semantische und die lexikalische Veränderung der deutschen Sprache.

Zufolge bietet das Unterkapitel eine Analyse der Ursachen von Sprachveränderungen, besonders von äußerlichen Faktoren, die mit Sprachberührung oder Beeinflussung verbunden sind. Unter

Sprachberührung versteht man Interferenzen, die einen Einflussfaktor auf den diachronischen Wechsel einer Sprache haben.

Wenn man akzeptiert, dass sprachliche Veränderungen das Ergebnis von über viele Jahre langsam hinziehender Prozesse sind, dann kann man eine Periodisierung vornehmen. Daher untersucht diese Arbeit nach diesem theoretischen Gerüst die Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und ihre Periodisierung. Das Problem der Periodisierung erweist sich als fundamental und basiert sich auf der Tatsache, dass jede Sprache einer Veränderung unterliegt. Eine Epocheneinteilung muss sich also mit dem Fundament der Sprachgeschichte, dem Sprachwandel, befassen.

Es gibt verschieden Kriterien, um die Geschichte einer Sprache zu klassifizieren: für die Periodisierung der deutschen Sprachen benutzt man sprachexterne Kriterien. Das hochberühmte Modell von Periodisierung des Deutschen ist das Modell von Grimm-Scherer, wonach die deutsche Sprachgeschichte in sechs Sprachstufen gegliedert ist: Althochdeutsch (750-1050), Mittelhochdeutsch (1050-1350), Frühneuhochdeutsch (1350-1650) früheres Neuhochdeutsch (1650-1800), jüngeres Neuhochdeutsch (1800-1945) und Gegenwartsdeutsch (von 1945 bis heute).

Die deutsche Sprachgeschichte beginnt dementsprechend in der Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts mit dem Einsetzen einer kontinuierlichen, schriftlichen Überlieferung. Wie schon genannt, die erste Periode der deutschen Sprachgeschichte ist die Althochdeutsche. Als Althochdeutsch bezeichnet man die älteste, schriftlich bezeugte Stufe der deutschen Sprache vom 8. bis ins 11. Jahrhundert, die von allem Anfang an in verschiedene Mundarten und Schreibdialekte gegliedert erschien. In diesem zweiten Unterkapitel werden die drei im Begriff Althochdeutsch Vorstellungskomponenten (alt – hoch – deutsch) analysiert. Demzufolge ist besonders wesentlich die Unterscheidung zwischen Hochdeutsch und Niederdeutsch, die an die Zweite Lautverschiebung bedingt ist. Die Zweite Lautverschiebung, die das Hochdeutsch von den anderen germanischen Stammesdialekte unterscheidet, kann auch als Hochdeutsche Lautverschiebung benannt werden, da sie das wichtigste linguistische Phänomen des Althochdeutschen darstellt. Daher kann man voraussetzen, dass sich das Althochdeutsch im selben Zeitraum entwickelt.

Die althochdeutsche Zeit erscheint zunächst als ein Experimentierfeld, als ein Laboratorium des deutschen Wortschatzes, in dem Spezialisten versuchen, die Möglichkeiten der Volkssprache zu erproben. Außerdem kann sie nicht als eine Emanzipation der Volkssprache gegenüber dem Lateinischen bestimmt sein: Das Schreiben in der Volkssprache war noch auf lange Zeit die Ausnahme und die überregionale Kommunikation blieb nach wie vor eine Domäne des Lateins.

Darüber hinaus beeinflusste das Lateinisch die germanischen Stammesdialekte und insbesondere im spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Zeitraum das Althochdeutsch, stark: Die Entwicklung des althochdeutschen Verschriftungsprozess bleibt fast völlig in der lateinischen Schrifttradition und

Schreibkultur eingebettet, so dass sich das volkssprachliche Schreiben auf Althochdeutsch an der lateinischen Sprache und Schriftlichkeit orientierte.

Um die Konsequenzen dieser linguistischen Beeinflussungen aufzufassen, die auf den althochdeutschen Wortschatz und Syntax deutlich sind, konzentriert sich das zweite Kapitel auf die linguistischen Berührungen zwischen Römern und Germanen und ihre folgerichtige Einwirkungsperiodisierung.

Die deutsche Sprache hatte nämlich in den ersten Jahrhunderten unserer Zeitrechnung zwei durchgehende Einflüsse erfahren, die ihre Spuren im Wortschatz bis heute deutlich zeigen: den der römischen Kulturwelt und den des Christentums. Daher weist das zweite Kapitel auf die Berührungen zwischen Römern und Germanen seit dem 2. Jahrhundert v. Chr. hin.

Die Berührung der germanischen Kultur mit der römischen begann dennoch in die Zeit Caesars, in der die zwei Bevölkerungen geschäftliche und kulturelle Verhältnisse knüpften. Die engen Berührungen zwischen die beiden durch Handel, Gefangenschaft, Hilfsdienst und Ansiedlung, mussten zum gegenseitigen sprachlichen Austausch führen. Demzufolge musste eine so innige kulturelle Berührung ihre Spuren in der Sprache hinterlassen.

Die Einwirkungsperiodisierung des zweiten Kapitels spiegelt sich in dem althochdeutschen Wortschatz und Syntax, die von Latein beeinflusst werden und die das Thema des dritten Kapitels sind.

Von den lateinischen Entlehnungen innerhalb althochdeutschen Wortschatzes ist leicht zu beobachten, dass Entlehnungen stark mit den Bedürfnissen der Germanen verbunden sind. Tatsächlich, die erste Phase der Berührungen wurde von Handel bestimmt und der lateinische Wortschatz, der in dem althochdeutschen Sprachgut entlehnt wurde, erfasste nur Lehnwörter bezüglich ihrer Bedürfnisse. Die zweiten und dritten Phasen der Berührungen zwischen Romanen und Germanen wurden von der germanischen Bekehrung zum Christentum und die folgerichtige Entwicklung von Klöstern charakterisiert. Demzufolge wurde das althochdeutsche Wortschatz von geistlichen und kirchlichen Lehnwörtern bereichert.

Außerdem wurde in dem dritten Kapitel die lateinische Einwirkung auf der althochdeutschen Syntax analysiert. Von den zwei berücksichtigten althochdeutschen Übersetzungen vom Latein kann man leicht beobachten, dass sie stark von der lateinischen Syntax beeinflusst wurden.

Infolgedessen kann man feststellen, dass Althochdeutsch das Erzeugnis der lateinischen Beeinflussung darstellt, weil vieles auf lexikalische, semantische und syntaktische Beeinflussung hindeutet.

Schließlich konzentriert sich das vierte Kapitel auf den sprachdidaktischen Teil dieser Magisterarbeit: Es befasst sich mit einer linguistischen Überlegung um die Beeinflussungsphänomene und die

didaktischen Instrumente, die man braucht, um diese Phänomene zu erforschen. ‚Contrastive Analysis‘ und ‚Error Analysis‘ sind didaktische Instrumente, die als ein Hilfsmittel für Lehrer zu verstehen sind, als sie ihnen helfen, um die Beeinflussungsphänomene zu verstehen und zu bewältigen. Tatsächlich sind Beeinflussungsphänomene ein Problem für Lernende: ‚Contrastive Analysis‘ und ‚Error Analysis‘ verwandeln sie von Problem in Möglichkeit, um Fremd- und Zweitsprache zu lernen und zu erwerben.

Um diese linguistische Überlegung realistisch zu machen, wurde eine kurze Unterrichtsstunde vorbereitet, in der Schüler einer Oberschule durch Aktivitäten und Spiele entdecken sollen, dass Sprachen nicht rein sind und viele von anderen Sprachen beeinflusst werden. Insbesondere, die erste Unterrichtsstunde konzentriert sich auf Italienisch und die Beeinflussung von Englisch und anderen indogermanischen Sprachen, während die zweite konzentriert sich auf Germanismen, die innerhalb des Italienisch entlehnt wurden. Demzufolge kann man schließlich bestätigen, dass diese Magisterarbeit ihr Ziel erreichte, als sie linguistische Beeinflussungsphänomene unter Berücksichtigung verschiedenen und entgegengesetzten Perspektiven auswerte, die aber beide mit den linguistischen Beziehungen und dem gegenseitigen Einfluss zwischen Römern und Germanen in der althochdeutschen Zeit beschäftigen.

## INTRODUCTION

« Most languages have been influenced at one time or another by contact, resulting in varying degrees of transfer of features from one to the other. »<sup>1</sup>

Donald Winford (2003)

As stated by Winford in the quotation, languages have always influenced other languages and been influenced from them. This reciprocal linguistic influence is due to the contacts and relations established between populations speaking different languages. Indeed, language contact is considered as a superimposition and combination of the involved languages themselves and related to the concept of interference, which is considered as one factor of the diachronic mutation of languages.

The notion of linguistic interference refers to the action of a linguistic system on another and the consequences caused by the contact between languages. It has a double meaning: it indicates lexical, phonological, morphological, or syntactic borrowings from a linguistic system to another, as well as the mutations activated within the linguistic competence of the speaker from the contact between two or more languages. Particularly, language contact occurs when speakers of different languages interact and their languages influence one another, leading to a transfer of linguistic features (Matras 2020), as sustained in Winford's quotation.

Starting from the concept of language contact, it appears consistent to presume that this contact leaves traces within the languages being influenced. Therefore, this thesis aims to investigate the presence of interference phenomena within Old High German. Indeed, the starting research question concerns borrowings within the German language and, considering the existing literature about this topic, it appears worthy to tighten the field of research and take into consideration the first period of development of the German language, that is the Old High German period.

As already stated, interference phenomena originate from and are consequence of language contact. From the existing and analyzed literature, it is evident that, within the Old High German period, the language that most influenced German was Latin. Therefore, considering what just asserted, the present work analyses interference phenomena deriving from the contact between the Germanic peoples and the Romans, which have led its traces within their respective vocabularies.

Particularly, it examines the products of the interaction between these two populations, that is linguistic interferences, focusing, as the title suggests, firstly on a diachronic analysis of Latin

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<sup>1</sup> The present quotation is included within the work *An introduction to contact linguistics* (2003) by Donald Winford and cited in his article "Languages in contact", proposed by the Linguistic Society of America.  
<https://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/languages-contact>

influence on Old High German vocabulary and syntax, and, secondly, on the Germanic influence on Italian vocabulary through a didactic proposal. Indeed, this thesis aims to fill a gap in our knowledge considering linguistic interferences from a language teaching perspective. Since the analyzed literature did not explore interference phenomena from a teaching perspective and did not present a related didactic application, it was considered worthy to ground the present work on them and, therefore, to open new research perspectives with the purpose of raising students' awareness about the importance of language learning, language contact and, consequently, about the fact that languages are not pure, but a mixture of many languages, as result of the contacts established between people coming from different populations and speaking different languages.

With these purposes, the thesis articulates in four chapters, which are presented hereafter.

The first chapter begins with an introduction regarding the history of the German language (namely *deutsche Sprachgeschichte*), firstly considering its origin and, later, its periodization.

However, before concentrating on its periodization, in the first paragraph a theoretical framework about development and change of a language is proposed in order to better understand German language's history, which is attested from the VIII century and articulated in six phases, according to the model of Grimm Scherer, as follows: Old High German (*Althochdeutsch*), Middle High German (*Mittelhochdeutsch*), Early New High German (*Frühneuhochdeutsch*), New High German (*früheres Neuhochdeutsch*), Modern High German (*jüngeres Neuhochdeutsch*), and Contemporary German (*Gegenwartsdeutsch*) (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 8-9).

As already mentioned, the present work takes into consideration the first period of development of the German language, that is Old High German, and examines the presence of Latin linguistic interference within its vocabulary and syntax. For this reason, since the purpose of this thesis is to analyze Latin influence and the products of such influence on Old High German, it appears necessary to firstly examine the causes of those linguistic interferences. Therefore, the second chapter deals with the linguistic contacts established between the Germanic people and the Romans.

After an introduction about the contacts established between the Romans and the Germanic peoples, it is reasonable to consider the influence that those contacts had as a consequence, which is theme of the second paragraph. From a diachronic perspective, it can be considered three periods of influence: the first period dates back from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD and concerns the first contacts between the Germanic peoples and the Romans; the second period dates back between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and refers to the spread of Christianity; the third and last period is the period of development of monasteries and the connected area of logistics influence, which dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century AD (Coletos Bosco 1997, 101).

These three periods of influence were firstly introduced and then analyzed as they represented three different periods in which Latin and the Roman culture influenced the Germanic peoples and their language. Indeed, since the contacts established between Germanic peoples and Romans were considerable, they must have led to a reciprocal influence, regarding both cultural and linguistical aspects. Accordingly, it can be affirmed that in the Old High German period the language that had crucial influence on German is Latin.

Therefore, this periodization is taken into consideration in the third chapter, which, on the basis of the three periods of influence here mentioned, diachronically analyses the linguistic influence of Latin on Old High German vocabulary and syntax.

However, before concentrating on the diachronic analysis of borrowings, in the third chapter some general considerations about the concepts of language change, language contact, and interference phenomena needs to be evoked, in order to better understand the concept of borrowing, its cause and classification. Indeed, with the term borrowing it can be referred to any interference connected with the reciprocal contact and influence of different languages, and it represents an active answer of the language to requests and influences deriving from another language (Gusmani 1993, 21-22).

Moreover, in the second paragraph of this third chapter, it appears noteworthy to present a brief overview regarding diachronic linguistics, since the three periods of Latin influence on Old High German vocabulary are later analyzed from a diachronic perspective, disclosing Latin borrowings and the reason why they are acquired within Old High German.

In this sense, from the considerations made in the second chapter of this thesis and the subsequent analysis of borrowings from a diachronic perspective, it can be affirmed that the influence of Latin on Old High German vocabulary was linked to the need of the German speech community to develop interpersonal skills, in order to express itself in different situations and for different purposes in the three considered periods of influence.

However, Old High German vocabulary was not the only sphere of language with exerted Latin influence. Indeed, also within its syntax can be seen interference phenomena from Latin grammar. Therefore, the third paragraph firstly considers syntax in relation to diachronic linguistics, and, secondly, analyses Latin influence on Old High German syntax from the evidence found in translations from Latin, considering both religious and philosophical texts, where Latin influence demonstrates to have an impact also on the syntactical level of the German language in Old High German period.

Whether the first three chapters concern linguistic and historical aspects, analyzing primary sources and considering the existing literature, the fourth chapter analyses interference phenomena from a language teaching perspective, basing its considerations on the existing literature, but also delivering

a didactic proposal to secondary school students, as its purpose is to raise students' awareness about this topic. Indeed, the last chapter of this dissertation focuses on the acquisition of second and foreign languages and its consequences on learners, which is relevant for teachers, as they embody the facilitators that offer support and advice when needed from learners.

From a language teaching point of view, it can be asserted that the contact between languages occupies a significant position within the interests of glottologists. Certainly, it does not represent a new topic, but it deserves to be constantly topical as it concerns a phenomenon which continuously appears in the most different situations and represents one of the themes that mainly offer causes for reflection for linguists of all leanings and interests, as evidences the first paragraph of the chapter.

Considering interferences within a language from a language teaching perspective, it appears stimulating also to examine the presence of didactic tools to study these phenomena. Indeed, the analysis of didactic instruments to study interference phenomena must be considered of great relevance as they can represent an aid for teachers to understand and manage those interferences which constitutes a problem for learners, converting them to an opportunity to learn and acquire second or foreign languages. Two tools are mentioned in the present work, that is Contrastive Analysis hypothesis and Error analysis, since they provide teachers with aids to notice interferences and errors in the students' linguistic performance.

Later in this final chapter, two different but linked didactic proposals are presented.

The first proposal concerns activities whose purpose is to stimulate students' awareness about the presence of interferences within Italian vocabulary, considering the influence of English nowadays. Indeed, as Latin represented an essential medium of communication in the ancient age, as evidenced in the previous chapters of this dissertation, it can be affirmed that English dominates the communication in today's world and influences our language with new terms and expressions that easily have become part of our vocabulary. Moreover, it is worthy to consider that, although in the preceding chapter of this dissertation lexical and syntactic interferences are analyzed, the case study focuses only on lexical interferences, since the time available to deliver the didactic laboratory is limited and, as it is addressed to secondary school students, the lesson represents only a brief and general overview of interferences phenomena, which is not analyzed in detail.

Whether the first didactic proposal is delivered to secondary school students, the second one represents a hypothetical lesson that follows the first one and is linked to it and to the main theme of this dissertation. Indeed, the first proposal generally considers interference phenomena within the Italian language, whether the second proposal concerns the presence of Germanisms, so that didactic proposals can be considered consistent with the preceding chapters of this thesis and linguistic interference phenomena can be seen from two opposite and different perspectives, but both dealing

with the reciprocal influence exerted in the Middle Ages between the Germanic peoples and the Romans.



## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 Deutsche Sprachgeschichte: inception and development

#### 1.1.1 Notion of German language and origin of the term ‘deutsch’

The notion of “German language” cannot be considered as unique, because it changes depending on the purposes and the psychological impulses of individuals and groups of speakers, as well as on geographical, cultural, religious, and political factors (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 3).

As every language, the German language is articulated into many varieties within the limits of its system: there are diatonic varieties or dialects, varieties of communicative situations or diaphasic, varieties connected to position and social identity or diastratic, varieties related to the medium of communication (written or oral) or diamesic and diachronic varieties that constitutes within the temporal phases of a language’s life (Berruto 2005, 60).

It can be presumed that in the Middle Ages there were substantial varieties of the German language, since the parcelling was even more elevated than in Modern German.

Therefore, considering the numerous varieties existing within the German language system and the possibilities and situations where the communication could and can be carried out, Bausinger affirms that it’s reasonable to talk about “German languages” in the plural (Bausinger 1972).

On the other hand, with “German language”, in the singular, is meant the linguistic variation that can be comprehended from all speakers, independently of their regional, social, and cultural background and of their level of communication. It also comprehends the standard variety transmitted to learners who study German as a foreign language, which means the simplified, normalized, and codified form within the many-sided reality that is the German language.

The original name used to mention the German language was *theodisca lingua*. To know its origin, it is necessary to look back at history: the process of annexation and conquest of the different Germanic tribes, started by the Merovingian, was completed by their successors, the Carolingian. Between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD the power of Franks was extended toward most of the occidental Germanic tribes. Only little by little Alemanni, Bavarians and Saxons began to consider the Frankish reign as their own. Consequently, they slowly began to develop the awareness of owning a common language. The linguistic peculiarities of these tribes were preserved for a long time and are recognizable with all the successive changes within the dialectal and regionalist phenomena of Modern German.

It is during the Carolingian period that the German language began to find its denomination, as opposed to Latin, which was the *lingua franca* the literate used.

The term that corresponds to the current *deutsch* appeared for the first time in a Latin source that dates 786. It is a letter from the Italian bishop George from Ostia addressed to pope Hadrian I, where it is reported that in a council that took place in England it was spoken *tam latine quam theodisce*, meaning both Latin, the cultured language, and vernacular.

The Latin word *theodiscus* derives from the Proto-Germanic *\*theudo*, that originally had the meaning of population, meaning *lingua vulgaris* in Latin. Further, in successive documents the Latin form remains (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 15). It originally designated the *Volkssprache*, namely the language of the people, the “ordinary” spoken language, opposing to the erudite Latin. This meaning could also have been possible for every other European language, but was asserted only for the German one, meaning that it was used from the beginning for the German dialects and can’t therefore be easily equalized from speakers with other languages (Ernst 2021, 87).

Conversely, Sonderegger (2003) allocates the origin of the term *deutsch* to a Germanic adjective, formed with the suffix *-isk* near the substantive *þeudō* f., OHG *diota* f., *diot* m.n. and meaning “Volk”, people, as appears in different Old Germanic languages, but only in German and Dutch was used as a denomination for vernacular or *Volkssprache*.

Furthermore, according to the author, three remarkable considerations about the term *deutsch* need to be mentioned:

Firstly, the term *deutsch*, OHG *diutisk*, can be embedded in comparable Old Germanic languages, under which the Old English substantivized adjective *þēodisc* (language, speech, idiom, translation) shows linguistical reference of meaning.

Secondly, from the West Frankish and Early Old High German form *\*þeodisk* have developed the common Middle Latin forms *theodiscus* (from which *theodisca lingua*), *teudiscus*, *theotiscus*, that were replaced between the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD from *teutonicus*, a construction following the ancient historiography of the famous Germanic tribe of the Teutons.

Thirdly, only in the German-Dutch speech sphere appears this special denomination “own linguistic, popular linguistic” as opposed to the nearby, from tribal name or geographic definition of language, but only in German it has lasted until the present. That was due to the special position that German had since the Early Middle Ages in Central Europe, between Romanic in the West and in the South and Slavic in the East and in the Southeast, and furthermore to the deep contrast with Latin-Romanic, against which the vernacular or *Volkssprache* raised more and more in the written form as something different and peculiar (Sonderegger 2003, 189-191).

The cultural policy of Charlemagne demanded the use of this expression, to find further spread and application (Ernst 2021, 87). For Charlemagne the spread of the *theudisca lingua* had a great meaning because it underlined the common aspects of the different Germanic tribes belonging to his empire and supported their attendance to his political project. The Germans, according to Charlemagne, should assimilate the Roman culture and the Christian teaching. In the *Admonitio generalis* of Aachen (789) and in the *Synod* of Frankfurt (794), Charlemagne invited bishops and abbots to take as object of sermons the basic texts of Christianity, especially the Lord's Prayer and the Credo. According to him, the use of vernacular was not only a useful medium of divulgation of Gospel and of the prayers between the people that did not know Latin, but also a political instrument that contributed to unify and dominate the different Germanic tribes, each one with its dialectal variety.

The cultural policy of Charlemagne signed the beginning of the Germanization of both Latin and the Christian cultural contents. In the Frankish empire, beside Latin, which was the official language of administration and Church, people started to write also using the *Volkssprache*, the language of people, that did not have a uniform variety, neither in written form (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 15-17).

Only in the Old High German period, in the *Annolied* (ca. 1090) that documents the form *diutschin sprechen*, which means "speak the language of the German people", and *diutschi liute*, "German people", and even more with Walter von der Vogelweide, the term *deutsch* seemed assimilated to the German linguistic system. Its phonetic variety *tiu(t)sch*, with initial t, is due to Latin. Until the Goethe age both forms, *deutsch* and *teutsch*, were used.<sup>2</sup>

However, as stated by Riecke (2016), the interregional communication persisted a domain of Latin, as there was no linguistic territory reaching out a linguistic awareness.

The coexistence of different linguistic territories, without an interregional norm, shaped the early history of the German language (Riecke 2016, 16), which will be discussed in the following paragraph.

### 1.1.2 Periodization of German

First of all, before concentrating on the development of the German language and its periodization, a theoretical framework about the development and change within a language needs to be made, in order to better understand German language's history.

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<sup>2</sup> Sonderegger 1979, 40. Although the reference is outdated, it was taken into consideration as the information used is considered important for the analysis of the term 'deutsch'.

In general, the history of a language is influenced by social, cultural, and political issues during different historic moments (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 4).

Every language is not pure, but a mixture of many languages, due to the influences and relations that have been existing between people belonging to different populations and coming from different countries.

Language and society have a close relation: language is a social product, used by human beings in communication and interaction with each other. According to Bauer, it can be also defined as a social fact, that exists not in an individual but in a community (Bauer 2007, 3). It is a system of conventional vocal signs through which people communicate.

As Hartmann states, language change is a matter of fact that can hardly earnestly be questioned (Hartmann 2018, 24). The author suggests that a language, in terms of *Langage* (Ferdinand de Saussure) is bound to people; without people as speakers there is no language.

Since the human being is historical, a fundamental feature of a language is historicity: as human beings, a language changes permanently and continuously. Therefore, language change, meaning the permanent and continuous variability and transformation, is an essential characteristic of a language. According to Schmidt, a language can also be defined as a system of social norms, that exist not before a language, but are produced from its use. Accordingly, a language change is a change of its use (Schmidt 2020, 1-3).

Language changes express in the structures of a language, but derive from its use, that become a rule and norm when they are codified. Linguistic structures and grammatical rules are not everlasting, but changeable. Every language is a social situation in perpetual evolution (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 4).

Indeed, Paul (1880) refers to language change developing the “evolutionary theory of language”: Language belongs to the natural facilities of a human being, to which also the evolution’s language is subordinate: there are permanently mutations, that can survive when in the appropriate environment. Since language is a cultural asset, the principles of cultural evolution are applied: during the speaking act and through it, phenomena that are generally called errors emerged. Every change within a language starts with an error, namely with a norm’s deviation. These changes or mutations generate themselves within the social nature of a language and the environment, that helps mutations to survive, is socially determined. When the speech community shows the need of new speech forms or expressions, or rather, when these new forms and expressions meet a need, then the “environment” is present for the mutations’ survival.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Paul 1995, 61. Although the reference is outdated, the theory proposed is accepted and used to demonstrate that a language change is also due to cultural factors and can be seen as an evolution.

Schmidt (2020) states that a language change starts with a variation. According to the evolutionary theory of language change, it can be enunciated that permanent variations originate in huge quantity and those variations that find an “environmental niche” survive and lay the foundations for an innovation. The finding of an “environmental niche” happens often in a socio-cultural area through selection: the speech community selects, consciously or unconsciously, “innovations from the variations’ reservoir” (Schmidt 2020, 3).

A language is, as the human being and the nature overall, always historical and can only adequately be described. Since the evolution is never completed, the language change never ends. Therefore, it can be said that another essential feature of a language is that it’s ever-changing. Languages are open systems; they must be so, so that they can adapt to new environments and be able to manage them.

The same idea of language never-ending change is shared by Ernst (2021): he affirms that it’s a fact that languages change during time. Language change is indeed indeterminate, which means that the future or final stage, as well as the possibilities of a language change, can’t be known and planned. The author also argues that, under the term *language change*, the change is not only a sound change or a change of vocabulary. Language’s change can be observed from different linguistic levels: intonation level, graphemic level, phonological level, morphological level, syntactic level, and textual level.

Language change phenomena proceed not homogeneously, but differ in terms of speed, sort, conditions, participating speakers, etc. (Ernst 2021, 28-30).

As stated by Schmidt (2020), since a language is constituted from two systems, language system or *Langue* and language use or *Pragmatik*, and they are bound to the speaker, and therefore historic, the elements belonging to these systems can change. Accordingly, it can be distinguished the following types of language change: language intrinsic change, sound change, lexical change, and semantic change.

Language intrinsic change concerns the mode of expression of a language, consisting of all formal levels of the language system. Language intrinsic change is change of *Significans* when the *Significatum* remains constant or not included.

Sound change is a change in the pronunciation of words of a language and appears as phonetic or phonological change: phonetic change refers to the replacement of one speech sound by another, whether phonological change refers to the change of a speech sound that exist.

Lexical change and semantic change are experienced from the speaker almost every day. The definition of lexical change concerns the vocabulary of lexical unities: words originate and proceed constantly. Among others, languages know two methods of lexical change: word formation and

borrowing from other languages. In particular, these two methods will be discussed later, considering lexical and semantic change within Old High German.

Since we continually need new words to mention new terms and definitions, also the transfer of meaning (imagery and metonymy) plays an essential role (Schmidt 2020, 9-13).

Change of meaning produces a word, that can be placed in new contexts. Nübling (2006) distinguish six types of change of meaning: change expansion refers to the reduction of semantic characteristics and the subsequent extension of the applicability of words; meaning reduction refers to the addition of a semantic characteristic, so that a word can mark less reference objects; meaning displacement is present when a meaning A changes in such a way, that the new meaning B has synchronously nothing to do with A; meaning transfer refers to the influence of other words, often of foreign-languages words toward an existing word, that changes its meaning or adopts an additional meaning; meaning improvement is infrequent as refers to an amelioration; meaning deteriorations are considered by Nübling the negative connotations used with women. <sup>4</sup>

In particular, from the enumerated types of change a language could experience, this dissertation will focus on lexical and semantic change within Old High German, that will be discussed later.

Focusing on the causes of language change, a language can change and develop because of adaptation and development. The process of language change is influenced by many factors, that can be divided into internal or external change: internal factors refer to grammatical changes, whether external factors refer to changes caused by other languages or influenced by socio-cultural factors. The factors this dissertation will focus on are external factors, since its purpose is to analyze the linguistic interferences of Latin on Old High German.

Related to changes influenced by other languages or by socio-cultural factors, the concept of language contact needs to be mentioned. The contact between languages, consisting of a superimposition and combination of the languages themselves, is studied by interlinguistics.

The notion of language contact involves two factors: the use of two or more languages and the place, and sometimes the time, in which those languages establish relations. Weinreich (1953) combines the two aspects, as he affirms that two languages are in contact « if they are used alternatively by the same persons » and that “the language-using individuals are (...) the focus of contact ». <sup>5</sup>

Language contact is also known as interference. The notion of linguistic interference refers to the action of a linguistic system on another and the consequences caused by the contact between languages. It has a double meaning: it indicates lexical, phonological, morphological, or syntactic

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<sup>4</sup> Nübling 2006, 112-114. The enumerated types of change are mentioned in order to offer a general overview of the classification of changes within a language. Only the semantic and lexical change will be taken into consideration in this dissertation.

<sup>5</sup> Weinreich 1953, 1. Although the reference is outdated, it was employed as the concepts expressed by Weinreich are accepted and quoted by many contemporary authors.

borrowings from a linguistic system to another, as well as the mutations activated within the linguistic competence of the speaker from the contact between two or more languages. Particularly, language contact occurs when speakers of different languages interact and their languages influence one another, leading to a transfer of linguistic features (Matras 2020).

In general, Weinreich defines interferences as « those instances of deviation from the norm of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals because of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e., as a result of language contact » (Weinreich 1953, 1). Moreover, the author clarifies that it is simplistic to compare interference to borrowing, as the interference « implies the rearrangement of patterns that result from the introduction of foreign elements into the more highly structured domains of language, such as the bulk of the phonemic system, a large part of the morphology and syntax, and some areas of the vocabulary » (Weinreich 1953, 1). This being the case, according to Weinreich, every expression of linguistic contact is a phenomenon of interference.

Within the linguistic system, interferences can concern every level of analysis of a language. As previously said, a linguistic interference indicates lexical, phonological, morphological, or syntactic borrowings from a linguistic system to another.

Analyzing these types of borrowings, it can be said that the main phenomena an interference can cause on a lexical level is the transfer of words from one language to another: the socio-cultural dominance of one language over another generates phenomena of borrowing.

According to Winford, « lexical borrowing must therefore be seen as just one aspect of a creative process of lexical change under contact, which builds on both native and foreign resources » (Winford 2003, 59).

Indeed, it is natural that an eminent language provides lexical elements to the subordinate language, as it is natural that those lexical elements become vehicle of sounds and grammatical morphemes that previously were unknown to the loan language. The same dominance can be consequence on a syntactic level, inducing the subordinate language to replay through imitation constructs and features of the model language, and on the semantic level. Semantic borrowing refers to the enlargement or the specification of already existing word's meanings because of a foreign model. The semantic change often concerns the category of calques or loan words, that comprehends phenomena of reproduction of meaning and structure of elements belonging to another language <sup>6</sup>.

In particular, the analysis of interferences of Latin within Old High German will take into consideration lexical, semantic, and syntactic borrowings, which will be presented later in the third chapter of this dissertation.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/interferenza\\_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/interferenza_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/)

In conclusion to this theoretical framework's section, it is generally accepted that interference is one factor of the diachronic mutation of languages. In case of intense and prolonged contact and in situations of marked difference of status between languages, the interference can cause even deeper effects, until the subordinate language is displaced. An example of deep interference is that caused by the development of mixed languages in situations of commercial contact or between people without a common language, which is the case of the interference of Latin on Old High German, that will be object of analysis in the second and third chapter of this dissertation.

This theoretical framework serves the purpose to delineate the principal factors responsible of language development and change, laying the foundations of the main theme of this paragraph, that is the periodization of the German language's development.

However, before concentrating on its periodization, some considerations need to be made about the history of the German language.

The German language, as a language with recognizable features within the Indo-European-Germanic family of languages, has an attested history from the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. Indeed, in this period there are documents in which features typical of a series of languages or Germanic dialects appear, and by reason of that, they can no more be generically defined as Germanic, but as German.

The history of the German language was once seen as a unitary and single process of development of its codified variety, the cultured German or *Hochdeutsch*. As the German language of Luther was the first model of written language, which was destined to spread throughout the whole German language's territory, Luther himself was and is defined as the father of the German language. On the contrary, the phases of linguistic development which preceded Luther were seen as mere stages, variously imperfect, in preparation of the inception of the true German language.

In contrast to the centrist and evolutionary point of view of the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, the historical linguistics is based on the idea that languages develop means of expression that correspond to the communicative needs of the speakers: linguistic mutations are processes of structure's adaptation to the uses. Therefore, the whole mutations can be seen as development, if the effort of comprehension of the linguistic situations during time is evident in its entirety, as functional system inserted within its context of use.

As opposed to Latin, the cultured written language, vernaculars spread from the roots of oral tradition in other written areas, in which they should find new forms of representation. This process occurs gradually and at different times, in the many fields of daily life and literature, always supported by the Latin contemporary written production, that serves as a model and partially as a brake. In Germany it takes a millennium until the German language replaces Latin and achieves legitimacy as a language with a cultured use (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 6-8). Consequently, the history of the German

language is essentially an history of the replacement of Latin through the *Volkssprache*, that is the German language (Schmidt 2020, 14).

The history of the German language begins in the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD with the introduction of continuous written record. This can be characterized as follows:

Through writing, the German language achieved more and more domains from Latin, as well as the language of education and religion. Therefore, the remarkable expression of T. Frings « Antike und Christentum an der Wiege der deutschen Sprache »<sup>7</sup> („the ancient world and Christianity in the cradle of the German language,„) is still effective.

Therewith is closely linked the fact, that the entrance of writing signifies the entrance in history, which is closely connected to Latinity, as just the Latin writing and not the runic alphabet or the Greek writing was ruined.

Language internal consequences of these assumptions are the expansion of vocabulary through word formation and transfers from Latin and the consequent approaches of exploitation of periphrastic verb forms.

Overall, this first period can be identified through a special relation of the *Volkssprache* towards Latin because a great part of the available German literature serves in any way Latinity, or rather the accomplishment of Latinity.

Those observations are visible from the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD: for these situations there must be a special “environment”, which was created through the Carolingian cultural policy (Schmidt 2020, 16-17).<sup>8</sup>

In particular, the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century signs the beginning of the periodization of history of the German language. For this reason, it is important to consider that the prehistory and the early history of the German language, respectively the Indo-Germanic and Germanic, do not belong to the German language’s history. When they are embraced within the language history, it’s because languages did not originate from nothingness, and they are important for the comprehension of the history of the German language (Ernst 2021, 40).

Everyone, who is involved with the historical dimension of a language, sooner or later should ask himself a question about its periodisation. This problem proves to be fundamental since the change underlies every natural language. Therefore, the periodisation must deal with the foundation of the history of a language (Ernst 2021, 15).

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<sup>7</sup> Frings 1957, 58. Although the reference is outdated, the expression of the author is taken into consideration as considered still effective.

<sup>8</sup> See also paragraph 1.1.1 “Notion of German language and origin of the term *deutsch*” for the Carolingian cultural policy.

Since the development and change of a language is a continuum, there are numerous attempts to classify it (Schmidt 2020, 15). Thanks to a classification, on one side the history of the German language emerges clearly representable, on the other it is academically wise and necessary to represent, that in particular periods particular phenomena or trends predominate. For this reason, in order to determine the contents of the single era, linguistic or academic parameters are required. Von Polenz identifies four criteria: internal language criteria, external language criteria, sociolinguistic criteria, and pragma linguistic criteria.

Internal language criteria refer to phonetic phenomena, but also to morphological or syntactical characteristics.

External language criteria refer to criteria of general history (Early Middle Ages, High Middle Ages, Modern German) or to social history (gentry language, middle classes language).

Sociolinguistic criteria concern number and type of linguistic varieties, varieties' relation, relation of the German language with other languages.

Pragma linguistic concern speech and writing, status of standardization and codification of language. Moreover, according to the author, the characterization of a linguistic period is and appears static: we become the impression that a linguistic historical period is unchanging and unchanged; then, suddenly a change occurs. If we assume that every linguistic change carries the history of a language, then every linguistic change can be assumed as a dynamic process. Consequently, the linguistic historical periods or ages can be considered as dynamic. It's not about the invariable features that concern a period, but about the predominant trends of change. Indeed, one of the functions of linguistic historiography is to recognize and denominate these trends, in which there is also a dynamic periodization (Von Polenz 2020, 21-23). From the enumerated criteria of classification, a widely accepted criterium is the external language one, which is also employed in the periodization of the German language's history.

As previously said, the history of the German language is reconstructed and based on written language documents, available from the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. Provided that the evolutionary process of a language follows a rhythm as fluid as irregular and barely delimited within the historical limits, the history of the German language is articulated in six phases: Old High German (*Althochdeutsch*), which developed between 750 and 1050 AD; Middle High German (*Mittelhochdeutsch*), which developed between 1050 and 1350 AD; Early New High German (*Frühneuhochdeutsch*), which developed between 1350 and 1650; New High German (*früheres Neuhochdeutsch*), which developed between 1650 and 1800; Modern High German (*jüngeres Neuhochdeutsch*), which developed between 1800 and 1945; Contemporary German (*Gegenwartsdeutsch*), which developed from 1945 and is still used nowadays.

The periodization follows the model of Grimm Scherer and identifies each period, within which specific linguistic phenomena stabilize: the linguistic changes are connected to the mutated communicative needs of the community (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 8-9).

The German denominations *Alt-*, *Mittel-*, *Frühneu-* and *Neuhochdeutsch* include a chronological as well as geographical and typological constituent: *alt*, *mittel*, etc. refer to a period, *hoch* refers to the spatial dimension and to the language's structure; *Niederdeutsch* (Low German) embraces the area situated at the north of Benrath line, whether in the south is located *Hochdeutsch* (High German), which characterized by the Second (High German) Consonant Shift, as it can be clarified thanks to the map here below <sup>9</sup>:



Therefore, the great difference between *Niederdeutsch* and *Hochdeutsch* is the absence of the Second Consonant Shift at the north of the Benrath line (Ernst 2021, 76-78).

In particular, this dissertation analyses the first period of development of the German language, namely Old High German, which developed between 750 and 1050 AD and will be subject of the following paragraph.

<sup>9</sup> Fleischer et al. 1983, 569. The map illustrates the spread of dialects of Old High German tradition.

## 1.2 *Althochdeutsch*: period of development and denomination

Old High German, in German *Althochdeutsch*, is the ancient attested written stage of development of the German language.

In particular, the term *Althochdeustch* designates a linguistic period as well as a spatial area, in which Old High German dialects were spoken.

Indeed, the German language developed from Germanic tribal dialects through a lengthy process of transformation, gradually coalescing a unity through linguistic adjustment. An essential condition for this process to occur was represented by the political consolidation of the Germanic tribes of Franks, Alemanni, Bavarians, Thuringian, and Saxons, firstly under Frankish hegemony and later in the German empire (Schmidt 2020, 261).<sup>10</sup>

Thereby it cannot sufficiently be underlined that the Old High German period represents the first phase of an at least partially standardized German language, as it developed a common and communicative form of speech from different tribal dialects of Franks and their sub-groups, Thuringian, Bavarian and Alemanni (Sonderegger 2003, 193).

Because of this, it can be referred to Old High German considering that it concerns the first period of development of a language, which undergoes a continuous evolution, and that in doing this an abstraction is made, because such denomination actually embraces a whole of dialects linked together in a related way: the same phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical changes have a different evolution in time and space and every dialect did not acquire a great consideration so that to dominate over the others. Moreover, throughout the centuries in which Old High German developed, the different dialects had their own internal evolution.

Before concentrating in its period of development, some important considerations need to be made about the notion of Old High German.

The German denomination *Althochdeutsch* includes different meanings: the adjective *alt* refers to the temporal aspect as opposed to *mittel* and *neu*; *hoch* is a geographic reference to the position of dialects that are interested in the Second Consonant Shift, conferring to the denomination a parallel and contrastive meaning opposed to that referring to the dialects not affected to the Second Consonant Shift; *deutsch*<sup>11</sup> is a linguistic reference to the system intended as a whole of dialects with (hoch)deutsch features (Alemannic, Bavarian, Langobardic, Frankish) (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 11). Therefore, according to Ernst, it should be considered that Old High German does not represent

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<sup>10</sup> See also paragraph 1.1.1 of this dissertation.

<sup>11</sup> See paragraph 1.1.1 for the origin of the term.

a uniform speech form, but consists of a series of single dialects, which are summarized under this concept (Ernst 2021, 77).

As a matter of fact, according to M. S. Coletsos Bosco (1977), Old German could be divided into High German (*Hochdeutsch*) and Low German (*Niederdeutsch*), based on the position of regions and their consequent attendance to specific linguistic innovations, particularly to the Second Consonant Shift.

In turn, High German could be divided into Upper German (*Oberdeutsch*, which comprehended Langobardic, Bavarian, Alemannic and Upper Frankish) and Middle German (*Mitteldeutsch*, which comprehended Middle Frankish, Thuringian and Silesian). Low German gave rise, with French influences, to Dutch and Flemish, spoken in the Netherlands.<sup>12</sup>

In particular, High German dialects are distinguished from the other Germanic languages and from Low German dialects for the phenomena of the Second Consonant Shift, a process which took place approximately between the 5th and the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. This crucial consonant change began in the central-southern part of the territory, a high and mountainous area, and proceeded through the north, appearing less and less completed, until it disappeared beyond the borders of High and Low German, the isogloss also known as the Benrath line. The Second Consonant Shift constitutes the most important linguistic phenomena of the period because it differentiated High German from the other German dialects (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 12-13). This sound change reflected the differentiation of the different Germanic dialects: without the transition of speech to a writing which was suitable for everyday use and opposed to the runic writing, following both Latin language and writing as a model, the German language would have not developed so as to be like it is nowadays (Riecke 2016, 14-15).

Since the Second Consonant Shift represents an essential feature characterizing Old High German, it can be assumed that *Althochdeutsch* developed in the same period.

In general, the inception of Old High German is established around 750 AD, at the beginning of the Carolingian age and therefore in the middle of a political and cultural tradition, that has persisted until the present age, whether its end is placed around 1100 AD, as in this period the evolution of phenomena that characterize Old High German finished and began those that characterize Middle High German (Coletsos Bosco 1977, 63).

However, the question that can be soared about its periodization concerns when Old High German began to distance itself and break from the Germanic language. This question cannot definitely be answered, because from the early stages, precisely from 600 AD, the only sources available are

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<sup>12</sup> Coletsos Bosco 1977, 59-63. Although the reference is outdated, it was taken into consideration for the analysis of the Old High German period as it is considered a bedrock of the studies concerning the history of the German language.

isolated inscriptions, whose dating is considered controversial even by experts. Within the ancient documents of Old High German prevails the artifact named *Lanzenblatt von Wurmlingen*, found in the north of Lake Constance, which manifests a single word “the runic writing name DORIH”.

If *-rih* is product of the Second Consonant Shift and its dating is probably between 550 and 620 AD, this is an Old High German proof of the Second Consonant Shift. Certainly, from this moment it would have taken ca. still 150 years until extensive texts applied Old High German (Ernst 2021, 79). Therefore, the written establishment of Old High German began in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century: however, it cannot be defined as an emancipation of the *Volkssprache* as opposed to Latin, designated as the language of clergymen and literates, but also as the language of politics and rights. Indeed, the written application of Old High German was promoted by Charlemagne, as he disposed that fundamental ecclesiastical texts shall be translated into German and that the sermon shall be understood by the people. Nevertheless, writing in the *Volkssprache* was still an exception for a long time (Schmidt 2020, 62).

In the Occident, the language of the Bible was Latin and every effort to improve the linguistic form, that in the meanwhile focused on the ancient biblical and theological tradition, was directed towards Latin speech and writing, which persisted to be the language of literates, especially in the sciences.

The efforts had the purpose to correctly understand Latin tradition and were connected to the religious and educational reforms promoted by Charlemagne, known as „Carolingian Renaissance “: through these reforms, which shall provide a renaissance of Early Christian and Romanic traditions, the different regional dialects within the Carolingian empire were reassessed (Riecke 2016, 17-18).

Given that the written language of the Early Middle Ages was Latin and that the reading and writing within monasteries was exclusively taught and learned in Latin, it was attempted to use the Latin writing also for occasional recordings in the *Volkssprache*. It is not exaggerated to notice that, looking at the proportions of what is conveyed, the Old High German writing is a small byproduct of Latin. Nonetheless, the first written language within Old High German texts was an accomplishment of not overestimate cultural-historical importance, because only across writing the German literary language could develop constantly from the ancient tribal dialects, along a process that lasted for a century (Schmidt 2020, 261-262).

In the dawn of the Old High German period there was only a few written evidence available, a part of which are runic inscriptions; a great part of written record appeared around the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. An important role in this sense was played by the Christian proselytization through the Irish and Anglo-Saxons and the Christian bequest of cultural heritage in the churches and monasteries (Ernst 2021, 97). For this reason, the Old High German period can be depicted as the age of transition from the Germanic culture to the Roman and Christian one.

Indeed, what is perceived of Old High German derives from the scriptoria and libraries of the Benedictine monasteries. Therefore, the Early Middle Ages writing is exclusively bounded to spirituality, and it does not surprise that the themes included in the texts are mostly tied to the biblical and monasterial life. Monasterial literati did not use Old High German, but only Latin. Considering that, the oral everyday language used by Early Middle Ages peasant rural population was still not appropriate, as the vocabulary and grammar of this language, that shall be required in Christian-teleological, juridical, and medical contexts, were still absent.

In this sense, Old High German appeared as an experimental field, as a laboratory of the German vocabulary, in which experts attempt to prove the possibilities of the *Volkssprache*. An essential part of this experiment was represented by the production of a glossary of Latin scripts. The knowledge obtained through this activity benefitted the original Old High German texts (Riecke 2016, 19, 29). The first written evidence is of religious and educational nature, translations and reworked versions of holy texts written in Latin, the language of literary and ideological distinction (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 20-21).

Therefore, the development of Old High German written language persisted almost completely embedded in the productive Latin written tradition and written culture of West European Early Middle Ages, so that every Old High German writing was exemplary or competitively oriented towards the Latin language and writing (Sonderegger 2003, 51).

Consequently, Old High German was markedly influenced by Latin and the presence of Latin linguistic interferences within the Old High German language was noteworthy.

For this reason, since the purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the influence that Latin had on Old High German lexicon and syntax, it appears necessary to examine the causes of those interferences existing within it. Therefore, as to better understand the reasons of the presence of linguistic interferences, in the following chapter the contacts established between the Germanic people and the Romans will be examined, as to lay the foundations of the analysis of linguistic interferences, which will be discussed later in the third chapter.



## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1 Linguistic contacts between the Germanic people and the Romans

The very first contacts between the Romans and the Germanic people dated back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. Of decisive importance for the history of the Germanic-Roman relations was the move of the Cimbri and Teutons through Gaul, Spain, and Italy between 113 and 110 BC. Although they perished during their campaign, they represented the reason for the exploration of new seats of residence in Southern Germania for Celtic tribes and moreover for the succession of Germanic tribes in their place. From that moment Ariovist, a Germanic prince and leader, moved toward Occident, passed Upper Rhine, and occupied the Pfalz and the Alsace. Thus, the Germanic tribes became direct neighbors of the Romans.

After failed attempts of the Romans to submit the Rhein's and Elbe's territory, the Rhine became border among the Roman empire and the independent Germania, and the Germanic tribes, which had established on the left Rhine shore, were conflated under Tiberius into the Roman military district of Mainz and Cologne. Rhine and Danube remained borders until the Romans occupied the south districts of Baden-Württemberg in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. <sup>13</sup>

From the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Germanic tribes, which were concentrated in the large new tribes of Franks and Alemanni, irrupted across Rhein and Danube in the provinces of the Roman empire, and asserted the heritage of the ancient culture. Consequently, this migration led to diverse changes within the relations between the Germanic tribes and the Romans. Indeed, through the exchange relationships and trade relations, new social and commercial conditions developed (Schmidt 2020, 57).

In particular, dealing with the history of the German language from the period of Charlemagne on and considering the conserved Old High German monuments of literature, in the first centuries of this era they experienced two continuous influences, that clearly show their traces until nowadays: that of the Roman culture and of Christianity.

The contact of the Germanic culture with the ancient culture, in particular with the Roman one, began in the Caesar's Age and led to a tightly technical, commercial, and even cultural neighborhood through unsteady battles among the Danube, Rhine, and Elbe.

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<sup>13</sup> Gamillscheg 1970, 3-4. Although the reference is outdated, the author displays interesting information about the first contacts between the Germanic tribes and the Romans, which can be used to delineate the history of the relations established between those populations.

From the numerous historic reports, it appears easy to understand how intense the Roman lifestyle habits was assumed in the Germanic sphere: for instance, the emancipators of the Germanic culture just as the former Roman officers and citizens understood Latin; innumerable Germanic people served the Roman army, in which they even adopted multiple Roman names; in the Trajan's Age the administration of justice could be carried out in the Germanic provinces of the Roman empire partially without the aid of interpreters in Latin.

Such a deep cultural contact shall bequeath its traces also within the language. Therefore, the tight contacts between the Romans and the Germanic peoples, through trade, bondage, auxiliary service, or settlement, especially in the Roman occupation zone of the Germania, must have led to a reciprocal linguistic interchange.<sup>14</sup>

The Germanic influence on Latin, particularly in the lower social classes of the population, was greater than the literary sources revealed: from it emerged numerous Germanic words, which spread from vulgar Latin across the whole Roman area.

Incomparably more intense than the influence of Germanic on Latin were the effects that the acquaintance exercised by the Romans and their culture on the Germanic peoples and their language. It is estimated that the lexical heritage of German counts approximately 550 words from Roman Latin (Von Polenz 2020, 37-40).

Given that the predominance of the Roman culture mainly concerned the areas of military organization, administration, administration of justice, trade, and domestic lifestyle, these areas of the German vocabulary were thus characterized by Latin loanwords.

That the cultural rank of Romans in the academic and artistic respect was not transmitted to the Germanic people is the result of the fact that the mediator of these borrowings, the troops of the Roman border garrison and their entourage, did not occupy high positions in social and cultural regard, and that initially only few people were open-minded about the authenticity of Germans for the different education of the spirit.

The origin of the acquisition of Latin loanwords was in few cases in Northern Italy and in the way across the Alps. A great part of loanwords in German was adopted in the Central and Low Rhineland from the Romanized Gaul, in which Moselle and Meuse were considered the main routes and the imperial city of Treves was considered the most important point of transmission.

The range in which Latin affected German provides evidence of about 600 Latin loanwords, which were so consistently naturalized in German that they are no more perceived as strangers and in many cases demonstrate their efficiency for the creation of derivations.

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<sup>14</sup> Schirmer 1969, 51-52. Although the reference is outdated, the author offers an interesting overview of the cultural influence during the Middle Ages, which is needed to have an idea of the period in which the Germanic peoples and the Romans met and therefore to know the causes behind the Latin influence on Old High German.

The moment of their incursion is thereby identified in the Second or High Old German Consonant Shift, that they mostly underwent from the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

A classification of the most important Roman loanwords, which will be provided in the following chapter, demonstrates which new areas of civilization the German people developed through the Romans. As a matter of fact, the conflicts with the Roman army and the subsequent employment in their legions implicated the acquaintance with the Roman military organizations (Schirmer 1969, 53). Furthermore, the Roman influence on the native idiom was just temporary interrupted after the breakdown of the Roman World Empire. Therefore, it is necessary to divide as far as possible the ancient word shifts to the more recent borrowings, not only to understand the development of the language, but also the development of the culture. For this reason, it is also necessary to determine what was borrowed in Germanic from the received component of the Roman vocabulary during the imperial age and what the occidental Roman languages has added under other requirements to the European vocabulary. Chronological evidence could be deduced from the ancient history of the Germanic and the Roman languages (Gamillscheg 1970, 9-10).

Shortly after the influence of the Roman culture, the influence of the diffused Christianity of the ancient peoples was introduced in the Germanic world. A significant date in this process is represented by the christening of Clovis in 496. Thereby Christianity was de facto defined as the state religion from the Merovingian age. Consequently, the church organization initially confronted the profane authority not as an opposition, at least regarding fundamental questions.

In the Frankish fiefdom, the church was subordinated to the king and therefore independent from the Pope. However, in the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century an alliance was sealed between the Carolingian and the Roman Church, which originated that specific union of spiritual and profane power, that coined the Middle Ages, not only in Germany.

At the same time, the introduction of Christianity provoked in the Early Middle Ages a contraction of contents of the late ancient intellectual world and their systems of concepts in the thinking of people. Associated to that were the profound linguistic changes within vocabulary and word formation relating to the complicated acquisition and incorporation process of Latin coined content of words in the German linguistic heritage.

However, before concentrating on the linguistic changes which underwent Old High German and were consequence of the linguistic contacts between Germanic peoples and Romans, the following paragraphs delineates the three periods of Roman-Germanic influence.

## **2.2 The three periods of influence**

After an introduction about the contacts established between the Romans and the Germanic peoples, it is reasonable to consider the influence that those contacts had as a consequence.

Since the contacts established between Germanic peoples and Romans were considerable, according to Coletsos Bosco the language that had crucial influence on German is Latin.

From a diachronic point of view, it can be considered three periods of influence, that will be analyzed in detail in the following subparagraphs: the first period dates back from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD and concerns the first contacts between the Germanic people and the Romans; the second period dates back between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and refers to the spread of Christianity; the third and last period is the period of development of monasteries and the connected area of logistics influence, which dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century AD (Coletsos Bosco 1977, 101).

### **2.2.1 First contacts between the Germanic peoples and the Romans and their linguistic relationship (1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century)**

The first period of influence refers not properly to Old High German, but rather to Germanic not yet differentiated. As previously mentioned, the Germanic peoples joined the Romans armies, and a first kind of trade began, in which the two worlds came into contact.

Romans and Germanic peoples came into contact along the flow of Lower Rhine before the birth of Christ and later, along the main flow of the Rhine and the Roman limes. It is certain that the relations between the two populations, from the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, remained peaceful for a long time so that they guaranteed a reciprocal cultural exchange. Germanic peoples obtained from the Romans, which were culturally superior, terms belonging to the semantic field of agriculture, hunting, fishing, handcraft, construction industry and clothing (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 34), as it will be presented in the following chapter.

Furthermore, the advanced society charmed with its different habits and its technique, and the language became faithful interpreter of those events: indeed, contents innovation, euphemistic intention, and fascination of what is foreigner were the principal reason of borrowings.

Therefore, the first contacts are fruitful for the Germanic lexicon, that enriches of many new words assimilated during the same action of knowing something new (Coletsos Bosco 1977, 102, 105), as it will be analyzed in the following chapter.

### 2.2.2 Diffusion of Christianity and Christianization of the Germanic peoples (5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century)

Germanic soldiers had been in the Roman army for a long time before Constantin. Since Caesar employed Germanic exile during the Gallic war, the Roman imperators have always known how to apply the martial efficiency of Germans for the defense in every part of the empire.

The cohesion of Germans in the Roman army did not acquire a hostile nature during the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Quite the opposite, Germans searched a contact with the Roman society and endeavored to rise in it. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the Occidental Empire was lacking the power to integrate those Germans, and, especially in contrast to the Roman anti-Germanic culture, a Germanic self-awareness began to develop.<sup>15</sup>

With Constantin began an era, in which the ancient Roman Empire established a tight relation with Christianity and the German culture was included in the ancient world, through a process that considerably emerged in the policy of Theodosius the Great, as the Church became the Established Church and for the first time the federate Germanic tribes were assimilated under a single leadership on the Roman soil.

The first Latin-Germanic linguistic contacts began in the age of the first translations of Christian texts, both through the contact with the people neighboring Romans and Germanic peoples and through the missionaries who announced the Christian credo (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 34).

The first Germanic people, who converted to Christianity, were the Ostrogoths, whose bishop Wulfila in the 4<sup>th</sup> century already translated the Bible from Greek into his native language. In other west Germanic tribes too, Christianity spread early; a greater part of the Germanic tribes was Christianized only later, mainly in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, through Irish and Anglo-Saxon missionaries (Schirmer 1969, 57).

For the old High German period the proselytization through Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks from the 7<sup>th</sup> century was of particular relevance. Indeed, they encouraged not only the foundation of monasteries, but also the basis for the partition in the church provinces, the occupation with the Holy Scripture and the growth of the holy literature.

One of the main problems with the proselytization was to bring the Christian intellectual world closer to the Germanic peoples. This was an extremely arduous process for the missionaries: beside the explanation of the real value of the New Testament, they coined new words or recoinced existing words (Ernst 2021, 83).

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<sup>15</sup> Waas 1971, 1, 27, 38-39. Although the reference is outdated, the author displays interesting information about the first contacts between the Germanic tribes and the Romans, which can be used to delineate the history of the relations established between those populations.

Indeed, the Old High German period can be distinguished within vocabulary as it performed the development of linguistic designations for spiritual and mental processes. The reason for it deals with the proselytism of Germans towards Christianity, that in the Charlemagne Age found its conclusion with the forced proselytism of Saxons. The education on largely spiritual procedures, on the inner life of the discontinued Christian vocabulary succeeded under the constant influence of Latin, the language of church service, the dominant community and academic language of the Middle Ages. Through this enrichment and change of vocabulary, the German linguistic mode of expression, previously characterized by Germanic paganism, was bended into a soulful language, as well as the countenance of the German scenery, thanks to the construction of churches, monasteries, and chapels. The examination of German expressions, that Christianity newly coined or pervaded of new significance in the Old High German period, reveals that they deal with essential components of contemporary vocabulary. They prove through the ability of advancement in derivation and composition an internal application under words of emotional life. Therefore, the vocabulary of the Old High German ecclesiastical language embraced numerous expressions, that until nowadays cannot have been asserted, so that the new belief of the German language has actually brought a great growth of words. This afflux spread across umpteen centuries: some loanwords were adopted just later, many German expressions dated from the occupation of translation, done by the preceptors within monasteries in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries (Schirmer 1969, 63-66).

Furthermore, Christianity originated the Middle Ages monastic culture, which created the new Christian written and writing culture, that at once began to open to the ancient traditional literature and erudition from the Roman-Grecian antiquity. The key to the widespread secular effect of Christianity on the European and Early German language history lies definitely in the nature of the Christian religion as multilingual book religion, which is especially expressed in the multilingualism of the biblical tradition as in the multilingualism of the Early Middle Ages Christian area with the need of translation from the language of the Bible to vernacular. Overall, the origins of the vernacular writing reside almost exclusively on the sphere of influence of the Christian education (Sonderregger 2003, 174-175).

### **2.2.3 Development of monasteries and their related area of linguistic influence (7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century)**

The ancient written attested linguistic stage of German is considered as the beginning of a new linguistic Christianity. Indeed, in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century AD the proselytization and the proselytism of the south Germanic tribal organizations and the birth of a Christian culture preceded the introduction of the Old High German writing. Otherwise, the development of a book culture persisted

by all Germanic peoples to be linked to the acquisition of the Christian culture, and so also to Old High German native speakers of different stirps, where from the 8<sup>th</sup> century originated the Carolingian monastic culture from different impulses of proselytization and partially in connection with the activity of missionaries already in the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Sonderegger 2003, 206, 214).

Differently from the Germanic, where loanwords were borrowed from the culture area, especially in many areas of practical life, in Old High German were yet introduced Latin loanwords through the church and convent schools, particularly in the clerical life and school system areas.

Though the influence of the ancient cultural and spiritual heritage, especially in connection with the Christianization and the exploitation of the Christian-religious intellectual world, this language was enriched through loanwords and calques. The Germanization of load-bearing concepts of Christianity was a complex process, which lasted a long time, until one of the proposed possibilities generally became conventional.

Significant and momentous for the history of the German language and culture was the fact that the written culture was introduced in the German language area with missionaries.

Irish monks, that proselytized the occidental part of the Empire and then the East-Franks, Alemanni and Bavarians, wrote in Latin. From the 8<sup>th</sup> century on were found, initially quite sporadic, vernacular texts, in many cases just single words within Latin texts. This writing was predominantly required and used from monks in the monasteries, especially for the conveyance of beliefs and doctrines of the church. Thereby was achieved a plurality of abstract words of religious and philosophic content: philosophic termini developed, that enabled a new way of thinking beside abstract words from biblical texts (Schmidt 2020, 57-59).

The Old High German ecclesiastical language is the greater event of a new constitution of the spiritual and religious vocabulary in the early history of German from different roots, as it will be analyzed in the following chapter.

Fundamental was the understanding that through the Christianization of Europe developed a new cultural and religious network of contacts among the European languages and that there rarely were distinctive special forms of a typical Germanic-Old High German Christianity or a Germanization of Christianity on the continent (Sonderegger 2003, 219-221).

However, the sacral and monasterial culture that characterized the Old High German period was replaced at about the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century by the culture of chivalry.

In conclusion to this historical section, these three periods of influence were firstly introduced and then analyzed as they represented three different periods in which Latin and the Roman culture influenced the Germanic peoples and their language. Therefore, this periodization will be taken into consideration in the following chapter of this dissertation, focusing on the development of the German

language, and particularly Old High German, in relation to the influence of Latin and Christianization on German vocabulary and on phenomena of syntactic interference.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3.1 The linguistic influence of Latin on Old High German vocabulary

As stated in the previous chapter, since the contacts established between Germanic peoples and Romans were considerable, they must have led to a reciprocal influence, regarding both cultural and linguistic aspects. Accordingly, it can be affirmed that in the Old High German period the language that had crucial influence on German is Latin, since it is estimated that the lexical heritage of German counts approximately 550 words from Roman Latin (Von Polenz 2020, 37-40).

Therefore, the acquisition of Latin alphabet, and the resulting contact with Latin writing culture, should be recognized as an essential step towards the creation of the modern German national language.

From this perspective, it is reasonable to let the history of the German language begin with the ancient products of this new writing system (Riecke 2016, 14).

However, before focusing the attention on the Latin borrowed terms which were included in the Old High German vocabulary, some general considerations about the influence exerted by Latin on the earliest stage of the German language need to be made.

As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, every language is not pure, but a mixture of many languages, due to the influences and relations that have been existing between people belonging to different populations and coming from different countries. As consequence of the contacts with other languages, a language is influenced from them and underwent changes.

The process of language change is influenced by many factors, that can be divided into internal or external changes. As disclosed, this dissertation focuses on external factors, which refer to changes caused by other languages or by socio-cultural factors. Indeed, object of analysis are the changes within Old High German vocabulary and syntax due to Latin influence.

Latin and Old High German came into contact because of the relations established between the Germanic peoples and the Romans.<sup>16</sup> Related to changes influenced by other languages or by socio-cultural factors, the concept of language contact needs to be mentioned.<sup>17</sup>

Language contact generates linguistic phenomena, among which the most renowned are borrowings and interferences.

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<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 1, paragraph 1.1.2 of this dissertation.

Interference is one of the factors related to diachronic change of languages and refers to the action of a linguistic system on another and the effects caused by the contacts between languages. The term has a double meaning: it delineates borrowing of lexical, syntactical and phono morphological elements from a linguistic system to another or it refers to mutations activated in the speaker's competence from the contact between two or more languages.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, with the term borrowing it can be referred to any interference connected with the reciprocal contact and influence of different languages. Indeed, the improvement of any linguistic tradition under the influence of another one constitutes a case of borrowing. Therefore, the whole patrimony of a language is due to borrowing since it was assimilated through imitation of another language.

The definition of borrowing concerns only those elements that a language has actually created on another language. Therefore, it appears necessary to try or at least make plausible the historical relationship of dependence between the element in question and the foreign model, excluding the possibility that it can concern an independent creation. If this relationship of dependence can't be proven or is not credible or is denied, then it doesn't make sense to talk about borrowing. Consequently, it is also necessary to limit this definition and to reserve it to the cases which concretely demonstrate phenomena of interference between two languages.

However, according to Gusmani (1993), the designations 'borrowing', 'loan', and 'loanword' induce to believe that, of the two languages involved in the phenomenon of interference, one cedes and the other takes from the first any element. Obviously, the first doesn't cede, but restrict itself to only supply the model, from whom another linguistic tradition creates a new element, which is acquired within its patrimony.<sup>19</sup>

Borrowings represent an active answer of the language to requests and influences deriving from another language. However, this answer, even if faithful, can't be completely adapted to the archetype because a correspondence between incommensurable entities, as the single linguistic systems are, can be only approximate. Indeed, the speaker can establish a relation precisely because he approximates, identifying the acoustic image in which the model's signifier materializes and its sense in a specific context with the corresponding elements, provided with greater affinity and presented in its linguistic system. In the process of linguistic exchange, beside the speaker who completes the innovation, another factor of great importance is involved: the linguistic system in which the innovation takes place (Gusmani 1993, 21-22).

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<sup>18</sup> [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/interferenza\\_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/interferenza_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/)

<sup>19</sup> Gusmani 1993, 9-13. Although the reference is outdated, the essays provide a detailed analysis of borrowings and calques and a thorough study of the interference phenomenon, which are worthy to mention in this dissertation to have a general but definite idea of this phenomenon.

After an analysis of the nature of borrowing and before concentrating on the classification of borrowings, it is reasonable to understand its cause.

The reason of borrowing of words from foreign languages could lie in the fact that a population denominates unknown items or events with foreign words because in their own language there are no equivalent expressions. In particular, when a stationary population came into contact with a highly developed foreign culture, they trespassed both groups of expression of the respective subject areas. Indeed, in general neighboring speech communities through commercial relationships adopted objects, institutions, or notions, that facilitated the everyday life and implied a technical progress. Moreover, beside cultural possessions, common terms as loanwords were also adopted in the given speech community or new expressions with appropriate means were created (Ernst 2021, 30).

On powerful political or cultural dependence these loan terms encroached on the vocabulary field and could completely own the local terms of borrowed language or easily develop from the present roots. And like this the influence of ancient sciences brought within the German language a vast number of academic foreign words (Schirmer 1969, 26-27).

A classification of the most important Roman loanwords, which will be provided in this chapter, demonstrates which new areas of civilization the German people developed through the Romans.

Given that the predominance of the Roman culture mainly concerned the areas of military organization, administration, administration of justice, trade, and domestic lifestyle, these areas of the German vocabulary were thus characterized by Latin loanwords.

However, before focusing on the classification of loanwords, some considerations about the type of borrowings and loanwords need to be made, in order to have a wider overview of loan's phenomena. As already mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, lexical change and semantic change are experienced from the speaker almost every day. The definition of lexical change concerns the vocabulary of lexical unities: words originate and proceed constantly.

Among others, languages know two methods of lexical change: word formation and borrowing from other languages.

For what concerns the first method of lexical change, the Old High German word formation leaned on the prefix and suffix categories, yielded by Germanic, and carried new formations, especially in the field of abstract terms, on different levels as calques based on Latin model.

By compounds began the development of multiple compounds which is typical and very important for the German language, initially in Old High German three-membered formations or tricomposite. Therefore, it can be said that the Old High German word formation was widely consistent with Germanic, whose inner content was coined from the semantic structure of Latin models.

Thereby, the original pure Germanic components retreated in favor of a *Volkssprache* of European mean, which received the essential impulse from Latin and its Roman environment (Sonderegger 2003, 385, 388).

However, this dissertation deals with Latin borrowings within Old High German vocabulary, that is focusing on the second method, namely borrowing from other languages. In particular, this chapter will take into consideration lexical, semantic, and syntactic borrowings through the analysis of interferences of Latin within Old High German.

One of the principal reasons of the Old High German standardization is essentially the assimilation and implementation of new loan and foreign words from Latin, based on lexical settlement, which had led the Old High German plurality in specific spheres to a new relative uniform lexis (Sonderegger 2003, 197).

Within the Old High German vocabulary, the original lexical patrimony, known as ‘Erbgut’ in German, must be distinguished from the acquired one, that is the ‘Lehngut’.

The original lexical patrimony consists in words of Indo-European origin and words of Germanic origin, as for example ‘Auge’ and ‘Baum’.

On the other hand, the acquired patrimony consists in words adopted from foreign languages, identifiable as an adoption from the stage of development of the sound system, from word formation, accent, and spelling, as for example ‘Spiegel’, deriving from vulgar Latin *speculum* (Ernst 2021, 84). The acquired patrimony is in turn divided into borrowings (‘Wortentlehnungen’) and calques (‘Lehnprägungen’), which can be also defined as products of interference, as stated before in this paragraph (Gusmani 1993, 182).

Borrowings can in their turn be divided into own borrowings (‘assimilierte Lehnwörter’) and foreign or loan words (‘Fremdwörter’). It can be referred to own borrowings when the new word adapts to the morphologic and phonetic structure of German. In the Old High German period, however, own borrowings are infrequent and almost totally linked to the religious sphere. This is the case of *biscof* from Latin *episcopus*, *piligram* from Latin *peregrinus*, *opfer* from Latin *offere*.

Foreign or loan words, in opposition to own borrowings, preserve their own original form without being influenced by the linguistic structures of the arrival language. The assimilation technique through borrowings from Latin was attested especially in periods preceding the Old High German one (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 32-33).

Calques differentiate from borrowings as they refer to those interferences whose limitation of the alloglot model is limited to the ‘innere Sprachform’, that is the inner speech form, and do not have as their purpose the reproduction of the outer appearance: as compared to borrowings, they concern a

less exact copy, a more refined mimetic process, without speaking of a real difference of nature between the two processes.

Calques can give rise to a new linguistic element, which combines material already existing within the language and enhanced of a new unit the lexical inventory of the same language, or rather it concerns in a function's mutation of a preexisting unit with repercussions on the syntactic use or on the semantic function.

Moreover, calques presuppose a more advanced bilingual level as compared to that of borrowings, and therefore, generally have a cultured character (Gusmani 1993, 219-220, 222).

In a time period in which the custom of translation is prevalent, the use of calques and semantic borrowings spread. It can be referred to calques in the case in which the material used to express new terms and concepts through the foreign language is already existing within the mother tongue.

Calques can be divided into semantic borrowings ('Lehnbedeutungen'), which refer to words already present within the Old High German lexical patrimony, which assume a new meaning under Latin influence, that is borrowings where the word meaning of the model language is adopted, but not its form, as for example OHG *bijih*t (Lat. *confessio*) and OHG *inhuct* (Lat. *conscientia*), and loan formations ('Lehnbildungen'), that is borrowing where the word form of the model language is adopted, but not its meaning.

Loan formations ('Lehnbildungen') can in turn be divided into loan shaping ('Lehnformungen'), with a formal support to the model, and conceptual calques ('Lehnschöpfungen'), a formal reproduction which is independent from the model, as for example OHG *findunga* (Lat. *experimentum*) and OHG *ursuahhida* (Lat. *examen*).

Loan shaping ('Lehnformungen') can in turn be divided into literal calques ('Lehnübersetzungen') and independent calques ('Lehnübertragungen') (Sonderegger 2003, 374).

Literal calques ('Lehnübersetzungen') are word-by-word translations that accurately reproduce the structure of the foreign word, frequently translating their single parts, as OHG *ubar-fleozzida* (Lat. *super-fluitas*), OHG *ge-meinida* (Lat. *com-munio*), OHG *wola-tât* (Lat. *bene-ficium*), OHG *arma-herzi* (Lat. *miseri-cors*), OHG *antfangida* (Lat. *acceptio*), OHG *forascauwunga* (Lat. *providentia*), OHG *lustida* (Lat. *delectatio*) and OHG *lustidōn* (Lat. *delectare*).

Independent calques ('Lehnübertragungen') have a less rigorous connection with the foreign source and are infrequent during an age in which there is a need to learn and assimilate new concepts. Evidence of that are words as OHG *redihaf*t (Lat. *rationabilis*), OHG *foraki-sēhan* (Lat. *pro-videre*), OHG *fersagēn* (Lat. *negare*), OHG *hōrsam* (Lat. *oboediens*) and OHG *giunstillen* (Lat. *inquietare*) (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 32-33).

The calques and borrowings here mentioned should be discerned in two groups, depending on whether they enhanced the language or whether they merely developed specific elements of it: Christian borrowings and calques, for example, enhanced it, because without Christianity the German language would have been lacking such expressions and words (Coletos Bosco 1977, 106). The religious vocabulary of Old High German, which will be analyzed later in this chapter, is particularly rife with calques, whereat semantic borrowings are of great importance. As a matter of fact, the spiritualization of Old High German vocabulary took place on different ways through semantic borrowings (Sonderegger 2003, 374).

Moreover, many Germanic words refer to the ritual sphere and disappeared from the Old High German lexicon because of Christian influence (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 32).

Therefore, in conclusion to this section, it can be affirmed that the Old High German vocabulary implied a totally new coming together of early Middle Ages Christianity, Latin Late Antiquity and Germanic linguistic conditions.

The opening of the German language outwards, one of the primary constants of the history of German, began in the Old High German period. Therewith it gave the precondition for the circulation of loanwords and calques from the German language to the north and east, which determined the subsequent European language history from a German mean (Sonderegger 2003, 386).

### **3.2 Diachronic analysis of the three periods of Latin influence on Old High German vocabulary**

Manifold changes occurred within the Old High German vocabulary, due to the profound transformations in every area of life during the Old High German period.

This dissertation aims to provide a diachronic analysis of the linguistic interferences Old High German experienced, focusing on the Latin ones, and to illustrate how Old High German vocabulary changed in relation to the influence exerted by Romans and Latin and the need of the Germanic peoples to express themselves across the three different periods of Latin influence.

However, before analyzing them, it appears necessary to provide a brief overview regarding diachronic linguistics, in order to better understand the subsequent analysis.

The distinction between diachrony and synchrony was theorized by Ferdinand de Saussure, who affirmed that diachronic linguistics studies not the relationships between coexisting terms of a state of a language, but that between subsequent terms which substitute each other in time.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, diachrony refers to the study of languages in relation to their temporal development, that is the study of those mutations to which languages are subjected along the time-axis.

In this way diachronic linguistics is configured as that specific area of research which looks at the results of linguistic change from a more abstract perspective, attempting to deduce those general fundamentals that regulate the change of languages starting from the examination of single cases, and which therefore has the purpose of develop a theory of change (Napoli 2019, 15, 23-24).

The idea that the linguistic change exclusively occurs in the phase of acquisition of language shows many problematic aspects. Therefore, according to Napoli (2019), it is proved that the conventionalization and the diffusion of new norms within the speech community did not occur through the process of acquisition but also, and especially, through socio-cultural systems and as a result of different cognitive processes. Indeed, the causes from which the development is activated are of different nature, not only linguistic, but also social, cultural, historical, and geographical.

Linguists made a significant contribution to the studies about language change, proving that there is a need of discern between innovation and change, where innovation corresponds to the introduction of a new form or syntactic structure, it can develop in every aspect of the socio-cultural dimension and be initially shared from more speakers. This innovation becomes change only when the form or structure in question are shared and accepted from the entire speech community, such that it becomes part of the linguistic norm of that community in a more or less long timeframe and each time through different dynamics (Napoli 2019, 26-27).

From this perspective, it can be affirmed that Old High German experienced a change within its vocabulary and syntax, as a consequence of the influence exerted by the Romans, which brought into the Germanic world customs and traditions belonging to the Roman Empire, and consequently their language, that is Latin.

Proceeding with a diachronic analysis, in the following paragraphs the three periods of Latin influence on Old High German, proposed by Coletsos Bosco and analyzed in detail in the second chapter of this dissertation, will be taken into analysis, offering an overview on the principal Latin borrowings adopted within the three periods of linguistic influence: the first period dates back from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD and concerns the first contacts between the Germanic people and the Romans; the second period dates back between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and refers to the spread of

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<sup>20</sup> De Saussure 1967, 171. Although the reference is outdated, the author and its work represent one of the cornerstones of linguistics which is worthy to mention in this dissertation, since it delineates the object of study of diachronic linguistics.

Christianity; the third and last period is the period of development of monasteries and the connected area of logistics influence, which dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century AD (Coletsos Bosco 1977, 101).

### **3.2.1 First contacts between the Germanic peoples and the Romans and their linguistic relationship (1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century)**

As mentioned in the previous chapter of this dissertation, the relations between Romans and Germanic peoples began before the Caesar's Age.

This first period of influence was based on tight relations between the two populations through trade, bondage, or settlement, especially within Roman areas of occupation of the Germania, which must have led to a reciprocal linguistic exchange (Von Polenz 2020, 37).

Indeed, evidence of the trade between them can be found in earlier borrowings, as OHG *koufo* (Lat. *caupo*) and its derived OHG verb *koufôn* (Lat. *cauponari*), which concern the ancient form of reciprocal trade.

Originally the term *caupo* designated the innkeeper, who concurrently mediated the primitive form of trade. Alongside appeared as primary designation of merchant the Latin word *mango*, which at once was not the innkeeper, but a merchant, who artificially glamorizes and falsifies its products. From it derives the OHG word *mangâri* (Gamillscheg 1970, 16).

The Germanic peoples, in whose barter economy there was only a limited trading, obtained from the Romans also commercial linguistic expressions, as OHG *koufon* and *koufman* (Lat. *caupo*), OHG *pfunt* (Lat. *pondus*), OHG *munizza* (Lat. *moneta*), OHG *sac* (Lat. *saccus*).

Moreover, the relevance of commercial relations between the two population is also attested by words as OHG *mangari* (Lat. *mango*), OHG *mutti* (Lat. *modius*) and words mentioning beasts of burden, as OHG *esil* (Lat. *asinus*), OHG *mul* (Lat. *mulus*).

Therefore, it is evident that the linguistic exchanges between Romans and Germanic peoples began before the age of translations of Christian texts, both through the contact between the populations neighboring Romans and Germans and through the first missionaries which announced the Christian credo.

As already stated, Romans and Germanic peoples came into contact beside the flow of the Lower Rhine before the birth of Christ and, later, through the central flow of the Rhine and the Roman limes. According to Foschi Albert and Hepp (2003), is certain that the relationship between the two

populations, starting from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, remained peaceful for a long time and such as to guarantee cultural exchanges.

In the first period of influence, that is between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the Germanic peoples acquired from the Romans, which were culturally superior, especially words belonging to the semantic fields of agriculture, hunting, fishing, handicraft, construction industry, which will be analyzed later in this paragraph. The foreign vocabulary adjusted itself to the local one due to approval, phonetics, and conjugation system.

In the area of living, the Roman world created decisive achievements for the whole civilized world and the original Germanic relations and objects could develop with great variety and abundance only thanks to the Roman culture. This development was clearly reflected in the language (Seiler 2009, 111).

Indeed, as regards the construction industry field, the Germanic peoples did not know the stone made buildings: their houses were without windows and therefore extremely different from the Roman houses. This is the cause of the spread of words as OHG *mura* (Lat. *murus*), OHG *fenestra* (Lat. *fenestra*), OHG *ziegal* (Lat. *tegula*), OHG *chamera* (Lat. *camera*), OHG *chalch* (Lat. *calx*), OHG *solari* (Lat. *solarium*), OHG *kemi[n]* (Lat. *caminus*), OHG *chellari* (Lat. *cellarium*), OHG *astrih* (Lat. *astracum* or *astricum*).

Moreover, the culinary art developed under Roman influence: besides *Topf*, *Napf*, *Messer*, *Löffel*, *braten* and *sieden*, which are of Germanic origin, in the kitchen is almost all of Latin origin and has arrived at the Germanic peoples through the Romans in the centuries described in this dissertation or later through the ancient, influenced culture of monasteries. Early loanwords are *Küche* and *kochen*, later *Becken*, *Pfanne*, *Tisch*, *Schüssel* (Schirmer 1969, 56).

Concerning the terminology related to utensils, it is worthy to consider OHG *pfanna* (Lat. *patina*), OHG *scuzzil(a)* (Lat. *scutella*), OHG *korb* (Lat. *corbis*), OHG *beckī* (Lat. *baccinum*), OHG *bēhhāri* (Lat. *bicārium*), OHG *buliz* (Lat. *bōlētus*), OHG *buttin(na)* (Lat. *butina*).

Another important new cultural acquisition was the cover of the floor with plaited or woven draperies, which the Germanic peoples got to know from the Romans, attested by the OHG word *teppid* or *teppith* (Lat. *tapetum*) (Seiler 2009, 81).

The words just mentioned are all lexical appropriations which occurred within verbal communicative exchanges between proponents of the uncultured population (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 34).

For what concerns the farming field, agriculture was reconverted according to the Roman model. Indeed, horticulture and pomiculture were actually acquired from the Romans, as relevant loanwords document.

Among the new cultivations, the cultivation of wine was the one that more rapidly spread. Therefore, words as OHG *win* (Lat. *uinum*), OHG *windemia* (Lat. *uindema*), OHG *most* (Lat. *mustum*) developed. Among the innovations of natural resources, viticulture played the most important role. Indeed, almost all its denominations, including the wines' names, are Latin loanwords, as *Winzer*, *Kelter*, *Trichter*, *Spund*, *Bottich*, *Flasche*, *Essig*, *Becher*.

Moreover, Germanic peoples learned from the Romans how to cultivate and work hops. This is the reason why the OHG words *bior*, *pier* (vulg. Lat. *biber(e)*) became part of the Old High German vocabulary. In particular, the reason of its introduction was in the lack of wine: when it lacked or it was inedible, monasteries must manage with another beverage, that is bier (Seiler 2009, 62-63).

An innovation was also represented by the solid cheese, made with curdled milk. Therefore, words as OHG *kasi* (Lat. *caseus*) and OHG *but(e)ra* (Lat. *butyrum*) appeared.

Moreover, in this period of influence the Germanic peoples first achieved a certain civilizing level through the acquisition of the Roman everyday culture, which can be attested thanks to words as OHG *scrini* (Lat. *scrinum*), OHG *karro* (Lat. *carrus*), OHG *chussi(n)* (Lat. *coxinus*), OHG *scamil* (Lat. *scamillus*), OHG *spiagal* (Lat. *speculum*), OHG *soc* (Lat. *soccus*), OHG *sola* (Lat. *sola*), OHG *chuhhina* (Lat. *coquina*), OHG *kochon* (Lat. *coquere*), OHG *kezzil* (Lat. *catillus*), OHG *tisc* (Lat. *discus*).

For what concerns the Old High German vocabulary, all the terms here mentioned underwent the Second Consonant Shift, if and where possible, because they became part of the new linguistic structure before the phonetic changes.

As proof of the fact that the First Consonant Shift was concluded between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, which means in the period of the first relations of the Germanic peoples with the Romans, it can be referred to the fact that Roman borrowings were not seized by the First Consonant Shift within Germanic and that Germanic names and words were invariably removed in Latin sources (Von Polenz 2020, 33). Indeed, by means of Latin borrowings that were adopted by the Germanic peoples before the 1<sup>st</sup> century, it appears clear that the Consonant Shift in this period did not occur (Ernst 2021, 68). Moreover, especially peculiar was that the ancient borrowings, that derived from Latin and were borrowed from the Germanic peoples during the cultural coexistence and cooperation in the first centuries after the death of Christ, presented the Consonant Shift already in earlier texts.

Therefore, they should have been borrowed before the beginning of the Consonant Shift and then passed through the transformations together with all native words (Riecke 2016, 14).

Consequently, it can be affirmed that when a loanword, which was borrowed from Latin into Germanic, experienced the Second or Old High German Consonant Shift, then it is certain that that word belonged to the Germanic vocabulary before the beginning of the Second Consonant Shift.

Therefrom it can be comprehended that the Roman loanwords, borrowed between 100 and 600, held marks of the presence of the umlaut as the Germanic expressions, but the inferences on an assimilation in the period of the ancients Roman-Germanic relations could not likewise be drawn (Gamillscheg 1970, 13).

As evidence of this, in German are present the words *Ziegel*, meaning brick, and *Tiegel*, meaning pan: both derive from the Latin word *tegula*, but one was coined before the Second Consonant Shift, whether the other after the Second Consonant Shift.

Later the study of the linguistic patrimony became more difficult. Indeed, initially for the Germanic peoples the knowing of Latin was superficial and limited to particularly meaningful words. Then it gradually increased, and the structure of the new language was so much assimilated that in the border area it was possible to talk about bilingualism (Coletsos Bosco 1977, 102-105).

The intensity of the Germanic-Latin bilingualism within Germanic provinces beside the Rhine and the Danube can be noticed from the borrowing of a word formation element: the Latin suffix *-ārius* (OHG *-āri*), as shown by the OHG word *zolenari* (Lat. *tolon(e)arius*).

The professional specialization of the Romans was so new to the Germanic peoples, that they also adopted their element of word formation, as the suffix *-ist*, *-eur*, *-euse*, *-ologe*.

Comprehensibly, not all Roman borrowings adopted in this period of influence referred to the Germanic peoples. The ancient is the name Caesar (OHG *keisar*), which was adopted in the period during which the Latin *æ* was spoken as a diphthong, similarly to the Germanic *ai*, and the Latin *c* before the palatal vowel was converted to *ts*. Many of the enumerated words show marks of the emerging Latin sound development, as the OHG word *ziagal*, whose tribal diphthong presupposed not the classical form *tegula*, but the form *tēgula*, with long vowel *ē*, further developed according to the Roman sound law (Von Polenz 2020, 39).

From the terms just mentioned, it appears easy to notice that these expressions refer to perceivable things, to objects related to material life. Abstract definitions, expressions of spiritual or ethical content are hardly among them in this first period of linguistic contact.

Therefore, it can be said that this classification of the most important Roman loanwords demonstrates which new areas of civilization the German people developed through the Romans between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> century. As a matter of fact, the conflicts with the Roman army and the subsequent employment in their legions implicated the acquaintance with the Roman military organizations. Therefore, in their wars against the Romans and in their service as soldiers the Germanic peoples knew the expressions related to the Roman military organization. As evidence of that, terms of Latin origin are still used nowadays and appear in the Old High German vocabulary, as OHG *pfil* (Lat. *pilum*) and OHG *kampf* (Lat. *campus*), OHG *pfal* (Lat. *palus*), OHG *straz(z)a* (Lat. *strata*).

However, borrowings related to this semantic area are less numerous, as demonstrated that the Germanic peoples who experienced wars had not a lot to learn from foreigners (Schirmer 1969, 53-56).

Moreover, despite the great meaning that the armament and army organization of the Roman Germania should have had for the Roman garrison and despite the increasing quantity of Germanic soldiers within the Roman army, the fact that the percentage of Latin in this sphere of Roman culture is not high can be inferred from the fact that the Germanic legionnaires resigned to the relations with their folk companions and therefore to their native language. The mediators in the acquisition of Latin loanwords were not the Germanic soldiers, but the great mass of Germanic population, which in the daily contact with the Romanized population of the provinces had to learn the vulgar Latin *lingua franca*.

Thus, the associated cultural areas, which originally were foreign for the Germanic peoples, were adopted together with Latin expressions: the building and furniture area of stone houses, the agriculture and pomiculture areas, the areas of farming, viniculture, and clothing, as already mentioned in this paragraph.

The about 400 Latin words within Old High German vocabulary are almost exclusively need's loanwords, as OHG *mulîn* (Lat. *molinum*), which was borrowed, although Germanic possessed an ancient word that designated the mill. However, the Roman mill was different from the Germanic one. Therefore, both forms were used, and the word used for the cultural advanced form finally replaced the ancient term (Gamillscheg 1970, 18-20).

In conclusion to this paragraph, it needs to be noticed that not only the positive, but also the negative aspects of the borrowing process are noteworthy. It is not a coincidence that the Roman vocabulary concerning the inner life, the expression of feelings and emotions, the intense affects, despite the living together of the Romanized Celts and the Germanic peoples over the centuries, was passed by without trace within the Old High German vocabulary. Anywhere, where the Germanic peoples settled in the ground of the Roman empire and they finally resigned to their folklore, they overextended the expressions of intense emotional arousal to Romanic.

Within the alpine Roman area, where from the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century there was a conflation of the Roman population with the Germanic peoples, can be found a series of expressions related to the inner life. However, in the Roman Germania in this period of influence the linguistic need was the only motivation for the assimilation of Roman vocabulary (Gamillscheg 1970, 20-21).

### 3.2.2 Diffusion of Christianity and Christianization of the Germanic peoples (5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century)

As it can be supposed, the religious semantic sphere was the one that mostly shows the influence of Latin on Old High German. Indeed, the slow decline of pagan sacred vocabulary, and its respectively replacement through new formation, loanwords or infrequently its reinterpretation towards Christian direction can be observed especially in the early Old High German period (Sonderegger 2003, 363). In this second period of influence, Old High German vocabulary is marked by the fact that within it took place the development of linguistic denominations for spiritual and mental processes. The reason to it lies in the proselytism of Germanic peoples into Christianity, that found its conclusion in the period of Charlemagne with the forced conversion of the Saxons.

The introduction of Christianity produced a shrinkage of the ancient intellectual world and its systems of concepts within the thinking of people in the Middle Ages. Connected to that were profound linguistic changes in the vocabulary and word formation, together with complicated processes of acquisition and infix of Latin words within the German linguistic patrimony.

The new religion introduced within the German language an abundance of new items and institutions and it was also applied to find new linguistic corresponding definitions. This was primarily the duty of priests and monks of German stirps, who had to make the new message acceptable to the people and to adapt the sermon and doctrine, so that parishioners and penitents understood it.

The structure of a Christian terminology took place on wide routes even through ancient native means, certainly not exclusively. Among the numerous possibilities, which were copious for a new Christian concept formation, the overlap of ancient law terms in the sphere of Christian doctrine and of the beliefs was of great importance. The certainty of law terms, their general or at least landscape diffused use and their immutability were worth to the linguistic accomplishment of Christianity in Old High German. Christian reinterpretation was experienced by words as OHG *wīh* (holy, belonging to divinity), *heilag* (original, intact), *geist* (arousal) and *heilag geist* for *spiritus sanctus*.

Entire spheres of spiritual vocabulary had to be developed with peculiar linguistic material across the model of Latin writing tradition, as for example the vocabulary in the meaning area of time and eternity (Sonderegger 2003, 365-366).

The Christianization of the language offered to scholars and spiritual educators of the people a twofold way: that of borrowing and that of transfer.

As previously mentioned, transfers can be differentiated into translations and calques: translations refer to translations from foreign words, which reflected only its content, whether calques refer to words borrowed from another language by literal word-for-word translation. Moreover, translations are easily detected; calques occur just within compound words.

The transfer of foreign ecclesiastical expressions within the German language was not easy. When the missionaries adopted them, they enriched the language through new formations from existing roots and through new applications of existing words. Moreover, when they maintained them in contrast with ecclesiastical expressions, they enriched the German language through new words.

Many of Latin ecclesiastical words withstood and were incorporated in the German linguistic patrimony (Seiler 2009, 1-3).

Indeed, few words of the Christian vocabulary are of local origin. Examples of this are the definitions of the divinity *truhtîn* and *got* (MHG *Herr*, *Gott*), already present in Old Saxon and Old English.

The word 'Gott' (God), which original form *\*gudam* is not attested, originally meant *das Angerufene*, that is the one who is called, or *das Wesen, dem man Opfer bringt*, meaning the being to which sacrifices are offered. It is a word belonging to the numinous sphere, typical of what is unmentionable and elusive (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 35).

Through the contact with Christianity and the Latin appellations of divinity (*deus* and *dominus*), which performed the role of semantic borrowings, the image of God is humanized and placed beside the masculine article.

The Christianization of the early German vocabulary took place especially in the field of calques, which means with the aid of German lexical components and the technique of word formation.

As previously mentioned, it can be distinguished the following types of borrowings within the lexical field: borrowings ('Lehnwörter'), which can be divided into loanword ('Fremdwort') and own borrowing ('assimiliertes Lehnwort'), and calques ('Lehnprägungen'), which can be divided into loan formation ('Lehnbildung') and loan meaning ('Lehnbedeutung').

It is difficult to assess how widely Latin words related to the church language can have been admitted to the development of the German vocabulary related to the emotional and spiritual field, as models for new word formations ('Lehnbildungen') or for meaning transformations of ancient words ('Lehnbedeutungen'). It has been estimated that the percentage of borrowings within the early Old High German vocabulary was at around 3%, that of word formations at 10% and that of meaning transformations at 20%. Some word formations were direct translations of Latin words, as OHG *ubarfleozzida* from Latin *superfluitas*, some were free translations, as OHG *hōrsamî* from Latin *oboedientia*, others free re-creations without direct support of form or content of Latin words, as OHG *unmezwizzo* from Latin *philosophus* (Von Polenz 2020, 59).

The more ancient own borrowings ('assimilierte Lehnwörter') joined the German language in the 4<sup>th</sup> century when Christianity became official religion of the Roman empire. As the borrowings deriving from the profane sphere, the Christian terminology was transmitted through verbal language

exchanges too; this can be inferred from the fact that the Christian terminology often regards linguistic form deriving from vulgar Latin.

The Latin Christianity, which raised as state religion, had a great need of special designations for religious, theological, and philosophical terms. This can be illustrated through two central definitions: lat. *redemptio* (redemption) and lat. *resurrectio* (resurrection).

Concerning the first term, from the Middle Ages German are bequeathed eleven attempts to express this concept. First at around 1000 was provided the term *irlosunga*, which is valid until present (*Erlösung*).

Concerning the second term, in the Old High German period around twelve words are documented as equivalent of Latin *resurrectio*, and from it derived other six attempts within Middle High German. In the later Middle Ages the term *ûfersteunge* was coined and it became accepted until present (*Auferstehung*) (Von Polenz 2020, 10-11).

Moreover, the entity of the Christian Church requested that the expressions that referred to the ecclesiastical organization, in particular the titles, were the same in all lands. Therefore, under the numerous designations of Christian and monasterial dignitaries there was not a precise one. *Pfaffe*, *Bischof*, *Pfarrer* and *Dechant* were borrowed and were evidence of the impact of the Old High German Consonant Shift (Seiler 2009, 7). Indeed, OHG *biscof* is one of the ancient borrowings. The lexeme of Greek origin passed to German through the vulgar forms *\*picopu*, *\*biscopu*, derivations of Lat. *episcopus*. Until the 17<sup>th</sup> century German indirectly assimilates almost all Greek words, especially through Latin translations or reworked versions. Also, words as OHG *opfarôn* (orally transmitted from Lat. *offere*), OHG *seganôn* (from vulg. Lat. *segnare* > Lat. *signare*) and OHG *suntia* (from vulg. Lat. *sons*) belong to the group of borrowings which dated back between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

A second group of Christian borrowings dated back to the 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century. To this group belong OHG *biscof*, initially indicating any priest; *jacuno*, from Lat. *diaconicus*, acquired in all probability from German Christians who, attending to the divine service, observe the presence of another believer in auxiliary function on the altar, beside the bishop. This form can be found only in Bavarian and Alemannic glosses, that is in the south; in the Franconian church, in the northwest, the expression *diacan* is used. This is an example of how southern German dialects and Franconian, until the construction of the central politic strength of Franks, between the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century and the half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, often covered different ways concerning the acquisition of new words (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 35-36).

Differently from Germanic, where borrowings were included in many areas of practical life from the Roman cultural area, in the period between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> century Latin borrowings were

introduced through the Church and convent schools especially in the areas of church life and school system.

Therefore, the education of the Christian vocabulary was largely related to spiritual processes and the interior academic official language of the German Middle Ages.

Through this enrichment and transformation of vocabulary the Germans' linguistic mode of expression changed, just as the German landscape by the building of churches, monasteries, and oratories.

The Christian doctrine initially brought a multitude of Latin loanwords, as *katholisch* (Lat. *fides catholica*), *Marter* (Lat. *martyrum*), *Messe* (Lat. *missa*), *firmen* (Lat. *firmare*).

The internal processes, the underlying doctrine, as far as it concerned Latin illiterate people, were, in contrast, indicated with German expressions, by whose education however Latin primary words were often faithful forged with German roots.

The consideration of German expressions, which were newly coined or fulfilled with new meaning in the old High German period, demonstrates that it concerns the essential components of the contemporary vocabulary. They evidenced through the ability of further development in derivations and compositions a particular deep application under words related to the emotional life.

Therefore, the vocabulary of the Old High German Christian language embraced numerous expressions and until present it cannot be argued that the new belief of the German language actually brought a greater growth of words. This afflux can be divided into many centuries: some loanwords were borrowed only later, many German expressions dated back to the delicate ability of translation of the cloistral preceptors of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century (Schirmer 1969, 63-66).

The Christian terminology which survived until present is expressed especially through semantic borrowings: *Glaube*, *Gott*, *Schöpfer*, *Himmel*, *heiliger Geist*, *ewiges Leben*, *Taufe*, etc.

Real borrowings are those which represent material things or specific positions. Evidence of that are places and objects of worship, as OHG *zella* (Lat. *cella*), OHG *tuom* (Lat. *domus, dei*), OHG *tempal* (Lat. *templum*), OHG *kruzi* (Lat. *crucem*); priesthood organization, as OHG *priest(er)* (Lat. *presbyter*, was associated to the Roman activities of missionaries), OHG *babes* (Lat. *papa*); church service, as OHG *messa* (vulg. Lat. *messa*), OHG *vespera* (vulg. Lat. *uespera*), OHG *chor* (vulg. Lat. *chorus*), OHG *cantico* (Lat. *canticum*) (Coletsos Bosco 1977, 108-109).

From OHG *kruzi* developed another important word: the view of the Redeemer crucified was designated as *crucifixus* in the ecclesiastical language, which was Latin, from whom derived the Old High German term *kruzifix*.

Another important borrowing was the word *incensum*, disdained by the Romans. The German clergy translated it to the people through an analogy with 'Weihnachten' (Christmas), OHG *wihrouch*

(‘Weihrauch’, incense), which is, according to Seiler (2009), the only case of translation of a concrete object of ecclesiastical application (Seiler 2009, 18-22).

As already said, through the influence of the ancient spiritual and cultural heritage, especially in connection with the Christianization and the valorization of the Christian-religious intellectual world, Old High German was enriched through borrowings and loan formations. Many possibilities were developed, so far as foreign thought contents were expressed with a new conceptual language. A series of church specific borrowings were directly adopted from Latin in the *Volksprache*, as OHG *klôster* (Lat. *claustrum*), OHG *munich* (Lat. *monachus*), OHG *organa* (Lat. *organum*), OHG *seganôn* (Lat. *signare*), OHG *opfarôn* (Lat. *operari*). Old High German examples from the church area are also *altâri* (Lat. *altare*), *chôr* (Lat. *chorus*), *predigôn* (Lat. *praedicare*), *abbat* (Lat. *abbat-em*), *kapel(l)a* (Lat. *cap(p)ella*, diminutive of *cappa*) (Schmidt 2020, 73).

The Germanization of term related to Christianity was a complicated process and it lasted a long time, until one of the many possibilities became common overall. Evidence of that is the Latin word *temptatio*, which was rendered in many OHG words as *fâra*, *(bi)korunga*, *kostunga*, *bisuoh*, *ursuoh* and *ursuohunga*. Not any of these words prevailed over others in Old High German; only in Middle High German the word *versuochunge* was widely used. To the essential Latin word *resurrectio* corresponded also many translations of the word, as OHG *heilî*, *irstantanî*, *irstantnissi*, *irstantunga*, *urristî*, *urstant*, *urstenti*, *urstentî*, *urstentida*, *urstuodali*.

Important for the history of the German language and culture was also the fact that missionaries introduced the writing culture in the German language area, which will be taken into analysis in the following paragraph, concerning the third period of Latin influence on Old High German vocabulary. Irish monks, who proselytize the western areas of the Roman Empire, Alemannia, and Bavaria, wrote in Latin. From the 8<sup>th</sup> century were found Old High German texts, in many cases Latin texts with single Old High German words, written in vellum.

Therefore, it appears easy to affirm that the condition for the introduction of the writing culture in Germany, that is Christianity, needed a spiritual revolution also within vocabulary.

In Germany the new religion arrived in different ways. Among the Roman settlers on Rhine and Danube there were of course Christians. Indeed, in Trier it was provided evidence of a Christian consistency from the Roman period to the Frankish one.

From the language use of such communities, some of them could have arrived in German through their sound form, in particular the Second Consonant Shift, as antique proven borrowings (Von Polenz 2020, 57).

Indeed, this writing was predominantly required and used from monks within monasteries to communicate religious contents and church doctrines. Therefore, a plurality of abstract words of

religious and philosophic content was created, as OHG *bigin* (Lat. *origo*) and OHG *infleiscnissa* (Lat. *incorporatio*). Philosophic terms as OHG *unentlich* (Lat. *infinitus*) developed, which, beside abstract words from biblical texts, as OHG *gidank* (idea, thought), *wistuom* (sapience, intelligence, awareness) and *kunst* (ability, knowledge), enabled a new way of thinking (Schmidt 2020, 57-59).

Moreover, through Christian influence the word was employed as denomination for the place under the earth and therefore hidden, which is the residence of damned people. Thereby the concept deriving from Latin *infernum* (Hades) was adopted. Related to that was also the OHG word *satanâs* (Lat. *satanas*, Satan), the antagonist of God.

The OHG word (*h*)*riuwa* initially meant sorrow, harm, pain, misfortune. Through the influence of Latin *contritio*, it obtained the meaning that it has maintained until the present, that is contrition.

The OHG word *buoza* originally indicated recovery, compensation, without any religious connotation and changed through the influence of Latin *satisfactio*, which meant gratification, satisfaction, and which was used in the Middle High German period in Christian terms, indicating expiation (Schmidt 2020, 72).

In conclusion to this section, in this period another example of the influence of Christianity is worthy to me mentioned, since it concerns the contemporary terms that designate the weekdays. The Germanic peoples on the Rhine already adopted in the pagan period the Latin days terms and the calendar by days from the Romans, transferring the Latin names within the meaning of an *interpretatio germanica* through their terms (Ernst 2021, 86). Indeed, the standardization in specific spheres of vocabulary arose in the weekdays' designations and month names, whose consolidation can be retraced in the Latin model.

The ancient world and Christianity met, together with the ancient vernacular elements, especially in the weekdays' names. Indeed, the Germanic peoples denominated weekdays with native stars and gods names (Sonderegger 2003, 198), but between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> century, under Greek and Roman influence, they adopted the seven-day week (Schmidt 2020, 54).

The practice of dividing the year in weeks and weeks in seven days arose in the pre-Christian Orient, where the seven planets, including the Sun and the Moon, were venerated as divinities.

This practice reached Rome through the mediation of Greece and penetrates Judaism and Christianity. In Greece, the oriental original names are replaced by those of native divinities, through a process which repeats itself within the Roman culture and which serves as a model within German, which, in turn, established the names of the days comparing the Roman Olympus to the Germanic one, at around the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

Christianism opposed to the denomination that reminded the pagan divinities but succeeded only partially in deleting the memory of an ancient linguistic and cultural inheritance, already firmly settled in the collective memory.

The origin of these borrowings was retraced by Frings from the western area of the Rhine and from the south Danube region (Frings 1957, 21).

The names *Sonntag* (OHG *sunnūntag*, from *sunna* ‘sun’) and *Montag* (OHG *manatag* or *mānintag*, from *māno* ‘moon’), coined on the Latin forms *solis dies* and *lunae dies* were not changed as the Germanic peoples did not honor the Sun and the Moon as gods: therefore, Christianism was not in conflict with the pagan culture. Another word used to denominate Sunday was *frōntag* (from *frō* ‘Mr’). However, the attempt to introduce the term from eccl. lat. *dominicus dies* or *dominica* succeeded just in the cultured ecclesiastical linguistic sphere.

OHG *zios tag* came from lat. *Martis dies* or *dies Martis*. As a matter of fact, the Germanic *\*tiwaz* (OHG *ziu*) corresponds to Latin *Mars*, Lord of War (Coletsos Bosco 1977, 112).

Germans replaced Mercury with their more venerated god, *Wodan* (Odin). Due to Christian influence, this term was replaced by the OHG *mittawecha* (*Mittwoch*), the exact translation of the lat. eccl. *media hebdomas*, deleting the memory of a pagan divinity which was even too beloved by occidental Germans.

The Roman god *Juppiter* (Jupiter) coincided to the Germanic *Donar*, from which OHG *donarestag* (Germ. *\*þunqaresdagaz*, from *\*þunarez* ‘Thor’, lat. *Iovis dies* or *dies Iovis*).

The Roman goddess *Venere* is identified with *Freia* (OHG *Frīa*), one of the main Germanic divinities, goddess of fertility and love: from that the OHG word *frīatag* (*Freitag*) (Lat. *dies Veneris* or *Veneris dies*).

The etymology of today’s *Samstag* (Saturday) particularly highlights how the arrive of a language never occurs in a rectilinear way, but rather undergoes different religious and cultural influences. From vulgar Greek *sambaton* derives the got. *\*sambatdags*, from which OHG *sambaztag* (Lat. *dies Sab(b)atus* or *Sab(b)atus dies*), with conservation of the consonant *m* of the vulgar form (Sonderegger 2003, 198-201).

Next to *Samstag*, used in the southwest Germany, exists the term *Sonnabend*, which is widespread in the northern part of the country, as it can be noticed from the map <sup>21</sup> :

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<sup>21</sup> König 1978, 186. The map illustrates the distribution of *Sonnabend/Samstag* in the German dialects.



The Romans appeared as conquerors on the borders of Germania, but according to the excellent civilizing character of this great civilized people, they exercised from these borders an immeasurable influence on the entire life and thinking of the inhabitants of the Germania.

Christianity rendered this contact between the two populations even indissoluble and accomplished a visible representation of this Latin culture of the Occident, as it substituted the idea of empire with the extended kingdom. How powerful this new governance encroached on the life of the Germanic peoples was not represented by the place: only what concerns the language is worthy to be mentioned. It is certain that it is limited to the assimilation of the mentioned borrowings. Therefore, as previously revealed, many German expressions embraced a specific meaning, others can be recognized as translations from Latin. <sup>22</sup>

In the Old High German period the proselytization through Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks from the 7<sup>th</sup> century was of great importance. Indeed, they encouraged not only the foundation of monasteries, but also laid the basis for the partition of church provinces, the employment with the Holy Scripture, the growth of theological literature.

The expressions adopted from the 8<sup>th</sup> century to designate the ecclesiastical officials remained foisted, but their assertive phonetic transformation clearly demonstrated that they were attained through oral tradition from Latin-Roman sources (Seiler 2009, 8).

One of the main issues by the proselytization was to bring the Germanic peoples closer to the Christian intellectual world. Terms as 'Gnade' (mercy) or 'Feindesliebe' (care for one's enemy) were unknown within the Germanic imagination, therefore there was no word corresponding to them. It was an extremely arduous process for the missionaries, beside the explanation of the material world of the New Testament and new words to coin or corresponding word forms to recoin.

It can also be observed, how missionaries competed for new words. Since their task was to bring Frankish and Upper German speakers closer to the Christian ideas in their language, a practicable way complete it was to form new words up to sample of corresponding Latin words by means of German word formation: evidence of that were 'Gewissen' (conscience) from Latin *conscientia* and 'Barmherzigkeit' (mercy) from Latin *miser cordia* (Ernst 2021, 83-84).

The irruption of Christianity and the spread of monasteries were accompanied by an intense enhancement of the national education. Since the subject matter of monasteries was based on the spiritual heritage of the ancient world, especially as far as it was not purely Christian-theological, and since in this period conscious ties on the ancient education and culture were frequent, it should not wonder that the most important technical terms related to the education field are Latin loanwords:

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<sup>22</sup> Singer 1896, 220-237. Although the reference is outdated, the article was partially used as it communicates significant information related to the contacts established between the Romans and the Germanic peoples and the influence of Christianity in the Old High German vocabulary.

evidence of that are *Laie, Schüler, Meister, Latein, Tafel, Kapitel, dichten*. To the area of convent school belong the Old High German words *skriban* (Lat. *scriber*), *grif(f)el* (Lat. *graphium*), *table(l)a* (Lat. *tabula*), *skola* (Lat. *scola*) (Schmidt 2020, 74).

The cultural demanding impact of monasteries concerned also material objects, as the introduction of the functional culture of pomiculture and horticulture (Schirmer 1969, 67).

In this period, beside the apostilles related to works, which were inserted in Latin hand scripts, developed a new text type, the glossary, where excerpted or new apostilles from the Bible were collocated in alphabetic order. With the creation of glossaries, the spoken vernacular could be helpful. Words for plants and trees, fishes, and birds or for the different human parts of the body became available in the *Volkssprache* and were used during classes in convent schools, with the purpose of making accessible to neophytes the knowledge of the world (Riecke 2016, 23).

Therefore, a series of imported cultivated plants carry Latin names, because the early monastic culture in the north of the Alps had late ancient Mediterranean models (Schmidt 2020, 74). Indeed, names of plants and flowers are from Latin origin too, as OHG *phlanza* (Lat. *planta*), OHG *fruht* (Lat. *fructus*), OHG *minza* (Lat. *menta*), OHG *senef* (Lat. *sinapis*), OHG *kol(a)* (Lat. *caulis*), OHG *zuibolle* (Lat. *cepulla*), OHG *pfruma* (Lat. *prunum*), OHG *ratih* (Lat. *radix*), OHG *kurbiz* (Lat. *cucurbita*), OHG *kumin* (Lat. *cuminum*), OHG *bieza* (Lat. *beta*), OHG *\*pfersich* (Lat. *persicum*), OHG *kestinna* (Lat. *castanea*), OHG *figa* (Lat. *figus*), OHG *ibisca* (Lat. *ibiscum*), OHG *lilia* (Lat. *lilium*), OHG *luwina* (Lat. *lupinum*), OHG *petarsilia* (vulg. Lat. *pretosilium*), OHG *lavendula* (Lat. *lavare*, because of its use as laundry additive), OHG *salbeia* (Lat. *salvegia*).

Moreover, life within monasteries, which held culture and civilization, contributed to the spread of new techniques, accepted with enthusiasm once again.

In the medical field, many words are of Latin origin, as OHG *arzat* (Lat. *archiater*), OHG *fiebar* (vulg. Lat. *febris*), as well as the field related to clothing, as OHG *pelliz* (vulg. Lat. *pellicia*), OHG *side* (vulg. Lat. *seta*), OHG *mantal* (Lat. *mantel(l)um*), OHG *kappa* (vulg. Lat. *cappa*).

Most of the words related to study conveyed Latin influence: OHG *tinkta* (vulg. Lat. *(aqua) tincta*), OHG *scuola* (vulg. Lat. *schola*), OHG *scuolari* (vulg. Lat. *scholaris*), OHG *maistro* (Lat. *magister*), OHG *ordinōn* (Lat. *ordinare*), OHG *briaf, brief* (Lat. *breuius*), OHG *epistula* (Lat. *epistula*), OHG *gramatih* (Lat. *grammatica*), OHG *grammatichari* (Lat. *grammaticus*), OHG *linia* (Lat. *linea*), OHG *tihthon* (Lat. *dictare*), OHG *regula* (vulg. Lat. *regula*) (Coletsos Bosco 1977, 110-111).

The effort of early German translators was a first prolific origin of the German scientific language, in which at least with oral tradition numerous technical terms could be inserted within the official German language in instruction and theological discussions. Nevertheless, the language of the ‘official’ science persisted to be Latin until the early modern era (Von Polenz 2020, 60).

On the one hand there was the exploitation of Latin, on the other hand the spiritual and religious communication with the population, together with the occurrence of vernacular. Therefore, the use of the *Volkssprache* remained not only limited to the sphere of texts related to mission and pastoral activity, even though vernacular texts were obviously required within catechesis, pastoral care, confession, and expiation practices. Eloquent testimonials of that were the included baptismal solemn promises, Lord's Prayer and Credo translations, other prayer texts, homilies, and confessional forms. Beside the religious literature developed a plurality of different texts and a diversified view for the starting time of the German speaking tradition. The period of monasterial writing is by no way limited to the biblical tradition and exegesis. In fact, new vernacular vocabularies developed, related to the medical and law field, that allowed to discourse about fundamental questions of human life using the German language. In addition, the new words served to understand Latin texts and there was not always a direct mean from the early native terminology to the German scientific language of early modern age, therefore the origins of the development of terms lay in this early period.

However, the great merit of this writing origins depended less on their meaning for the interpersonal communication since it was bounded to Latin in all fundamental questions about everyday life for centuries (Riecke 2016, 36).

Indeed, the use of the German language was initially limited to the sphere of lay instruction. The Old High German interlinear model of the Benedictine norm of the early 9<sup>th</sup> century was intended for the internal use of clergy. The German version concerned not an autonomous text, but a consecutive verbatim of Latin rule texts. However, Einhard, Charlemagne's biographer, affirmed that vernacular aspects of the Carolingian educational reform were not limited to religious reasons. To Charlemagne and his servants seemed clear that the *Volkssprache* and its tradition should have been fostered in order to the project of Christianization by means of the *Volkssprache* to be successful (Riecke 2016, 25-26).

At the end of the Old High German period, the German language area was impressed with a vivid writing culture within monasteries.

The essential cultural and historical requirement for the process of writing of Old High German was certainly Christianity. In contrast with Latin educational language and oral vernacular, in convent schools developed new academic Old High German writing schools (Riecke 2016, 37).

The conflict of German writing monks with Latin vocabulary and Christian worldview was hard and consistently needed new tentative attempts (Von Polenz 2020, 59).

According to Sonderegger (2003), the Old High German vocabulary gave in some ways information about the Old High German linguistic levels, which in their peculiarity are not explored up to the end.

Anyway, Old High German, despite its intense monasterial specific tradition, incorporated different linguistic levels, whose spread was shaped from the numerous marks of oral vernacular, as for example in apostilles about technical and scientific language and in school language, in monasterial and clerical language, where Latin co-determined Old High German as model or basic language at every turn (Sonderegger 2003, 378).

The linguistic awareness was slowly developed and finally conduced to the creation of an original national culture, which was first debilitated and then invigorated by the transnational Frankish ideas of unity, and particularly to the consolidation and achievement of a religious unity. Therefore, this new linguistic awareness did not impede that the single High German language areas drifted apart because of the different development of its sound and form system, its irregular phoneme-grapheme-term, and its heterogeneous vocabulary. All literati by the textual work with an orientation towards Latin precluded a profound division in the High German territories. This factor proved to be more powerful than the predominant centrifugal power of language change (Riecke 2016, 37).

Finally, it can be summed up that in their religious fervor of novices, monks of cultural centers translated Latin texts, adapting by any means the German dialects, still rough and approximate, in order to express religious and spiritual concepts, which were based along the lines of the Latin model. Translations were inevitably full of Latinized neologisms and addressed to the people, that could recite the Lord's Prayer and read the Gospel using its own mother tongue.

The possibility of penetration of Latin within Old High German increased more and more: every aspect of the German language was permeated of Latin or Latinized expressions, not only vocabulary (Coletsos Bosco 1977, 105), but also syntax, as it will be analyzed in the following paragraph.

In conclusion to these paragraphs concerning the diachronic analysis of Latin influence on Old High German vocabulary, it can be summarized that the influence of Latin on Old High German lexicon was linked to the need of the German speech community to develop interpersonal and communicative skills in order to express itself in different situations and for different purposes in the three periods of influence analyzed.

As evidence of this, in the first period of Latin influence (1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century), the linguistic relationship between the Germanic peoples and the Romans was based on trade and the Latin vocabulary that became part of the Old High German linguistic patrimony comprehended almost exclusively loanwords related to their needs. Moreover, in this period the Roman culture permeated in the Germanic world with new terms and expressions related to a new concept and area of living, such as agriculture, pomiculture, viniculture, farming, building, and clothing, and Old High German included these new borrowed terms within its vocabulary.

On the other hand, in the second (5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> century) and third (7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century) period of influence,

with the proselytization of the Germanic peoples and the subsequent development of monasteries, Old High German vocabulary was enriched with terms concerning the religious sphere, and in particular Christianity.

For this reason, it is worthy to underline how tight is the relation between the development of Old High German vocabulary, with the acquisition of borrowings and calques from Latin, and the linguistic need of the Germanic peoples in this period of Roman Latin influence.

### **3.3 Phenomena of Latin interference on Old High German syntax**

According to the traditional position and spiritual situation of Old High German opposite to Latin, the Old High German syntax was influenced in many traits by Latin grammar. However, before concentrating on the analysis of phenomena of Latin interference on Old High German syntax, it appears worthy to consider this area of interest in relation to diachronic linguistics, just as Old High German vocabulary was diachronically examined at the beginning of this chapter.

In particular, of remarkable importance for this paragraph is the model of syntactic nature developed by Giuseppe Longobardi, whose basic theory is based on the fact that through the analysis of syntactic parameters, which are examined in regard to the presence or absence of specific values within languages and their reciprocal correlation with other traits, it can come to a comparison of different languages' syntax and to a statistical measurement of the syntactical distance between the same languages, independently from their family relations, that is from their belonging or not to the same language family (Longobardi 2003, 165-208), which can therefore be applied to Latin and Old High German, which are objects of analysis in this dissertation.

An analysis of Old High German syntax can be made only on the basis of written tradition, which developed at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and almost exclusively limited to monasterial places of transmission, as Fulda, Trier, Mainz, Lorsch and others, as illustrated in the map here below <sup>23</sup>:

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<sup>23</sup> Fleischer et al. 1983, 570. The map illustrates the spread of religious centers of literary tradition in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.



Assumed that writing in the Early Middle Ages was primarily shaped through Latin, therefore the written record of texts written in Old High German vernacular represented something peculiar. Since Old High German did not know a uniform, national written language, written forms conformed the vernacular spoken in particular locations.<sup>24</sup> However, in these texts the Latin influence was preserved.

According to Foschi Albert and Hepp (2003), it should be considered that scribes, authors, and copyists in the Old High German period followed the Latin model, especially in translations and reworked versions (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 42), as it will be analyzed later in this paragraph. Many Old High German linguistic documents are translations from Latin and, especially in texts belonging to Christian contexts, Old High German syntax was intensely influenced by Latin one.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Admoni 1990, 22. Although the reference is outdated, it provides an interesting point of view concerning both Old High German linguistic period and written records belonging to it, which are object of analysis of this dissertation and, in particular, of this chapter.

<sup>25</sup> Sonderegger 1987, 267. Although the reference is outdated, the author contributes to offer an analysis of Old High German syntax, underlying its correspondence with the Latin one, as consequence of the influence exerted by Latin in this period.

Evidence of this is found in the “Old High German Tatian”, a translation of Tatian’s Gospel Harmony. The translation here presented dated back to the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, at around 830, in the Fulda monastery under the direction of abbot Hrabanus Maurus<sup>26</sup> :

| Latein                                  | Althochdeutsch                        |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Vf                                      | Vf                                    |
| Johannes,4,4. <b>Oportebat autem</b>    | 87,1. <b>Gilamf</b>                   |
| Vn                                      | Vn                                    |
| <b>eum transire per Samariam.</b>       | <b>inan uaran thuruh Samariam.</b>    |
| Vf                                      | Vf                                    |
| 5. <b>Venit in civitatem Samariae</b>   | <b>Inti quam thō in burg</b>          |
| Vf                                      | Vf Vn                                 |
| <b>quae dicitur Sychar, iuxta</b>       | <b>thiu dār ist giuetan Sychar,</b>   |
| Vf                                      | Vf                                    |
| <b>predium quod dedit Iacob</b>         | <b>uodile, den dār gab Iacob</b>      |
| <b>Ioseph filio suo.</b>                | <b>Iosebe sīnemo sune.</b>            |
| Vf                                      | Vf                                    |
| 6. <b>Erat ibi fons Iacob.</b>          | <b>Uuas dār brunno Iacobes.</b>       |
| Vn                                      | Vf Vn                                 |
| <b>Ihesus ergo fatigatus ex itinere</b> | <b>Der heilant uuas giuueigit fon</b> |
| Vf                                      | Vf                                    |
| <b>sedebat sic super fontem;</b>        | <b>saz sō oba themo brunnen;</b>      |
| Vf                                      | Vf                                    |
| <b>hora erat quasi sexta.</b>           | <b>uuas thō zīt nāh sexta.</b>        |
| [...]                                   | [...]                                 |

As it can be noticed, the “Old High German Tatian” consists of a word-by-word translation from Latin into Old High German that is divided into two columns as a bilingual text: on the left there is the Latin text and, on the right, its Old High German translation in the same line and word sequence. Already in the first verse (*Gilamf*), it appears clear from the superficial comparison of the two versions how the Old High German translation is geared towards the Latin original text, both concerning vocabulary and word order.

The relation between original text and translation is hallmarked by an accurate reflection of structures of the Latin model in the Old High German translation. In both versions, word order is determined by the construction *Accusativus cum infinitivo* (a.c.i.): the finite verb *oportebat* (it is necessary) and

<sup>26</sup> Tatian 87, 1 (Christus und die Samariterin). The text with the equivalent translation’s facilities is taken from Gerdes and Spellerberg 1991, 140

its correspondent translation *gilamf* (to be essential, necessary) occupy the first position and include the subject as impersonal pronoun.

In the second verse (*inan uaran thuruh Samariam*), the infinite verb *transire* (to go over) and its correspondent Old High German *uaran* (pass) follow in both versions the direct object, following OV word order. Indeed, the object is expressed through the personal pronoun in the third person singular: Latin *eum* is the accusative singular of *eus* (he), which in Old High German correspond to *inan*.

In the third verse (*Inti quam thō in burg Samariae [...]*), the finite verb form *quam* (infinitive *queman*, meaning to come), as in Latin (*venit*), the subject in the form of personal pronoun. Moreover, in the second relative subordinate clause, which is introduced in Latin through *quod* and in Old High German through *den dār*, the finite verb form (*dedit* – third person singular indicative perfect active of *dare*, meaning to give In Latin, and *gab* – third person singular indicative preterit active of *geban*, meaning to give in Old High German) stands in both versions before the subject (*Iacob*).

Moreover, the inversion of word order from Latin *filio suo* to Old High German *sīnemo sune* is remarkable. Indeed, the translation differ from the original and seem to confirm the tendency according to which the possessive pronoun (*sīnemo*) in Old High German is positioned as attributive complement before the subject (*sune*).

The seventh verse begin in both versions with the finite verb form (*erat* - third person singular indicative preterit active of *esse*, meaning to be in Latin, and *uuas* - third person singular indicative preterit active of *wesan*, meaning to be in Old High German). Afterwards follow the adverb (*ibi* in the Latin version and *dār* in the Old High German one, both meaning there) and the predicative noun (*fons Iacob – brunno Iacobes*).

Moreover, concerning the lexicalization of the main components, in the Old High German text it can be noticed that the subject, as in Latin, is not realized, if it is replaced from a pronoun. As evidence of this, in the first (*Gilamf [...]*), second (*[...] quam [...]*), and third (*Uuas [...]*) clauses, the subject is included in the finite verb form and occupies the first position in the main clause and not the second position after the subject.

The position of the finite verb differs from the Latin original version only in the final part of the last clause (*uuas thō zīt nāh sesta*).

The tendency concerning the use of combinatory verb forms is confirmed through the examples *ist giquetan* and *uuas giuueigit*. Indeed, in the Old High German syntax, one of the main changes was the development of new periphrastic verb forms to express the future and the passive form.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, it is worthy to notice that in both versions the finite verb is followed by an adverbial designation of the way (Latin *sic* and Old High German *sō*, both meaning in this way), whereby the

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.stefanjacob.de/geschichte/unterseiten/textproben/althochdeutsch>

object in form of prepositional phrase is connected with a locative (*super fontem – oba themo brunnen*, meaning on this fountain) (Schulze 2003, 13-14).

In conclusion, considering the enumerated observations, it can be concluded that this analysis evidences that the Old High German translation is tightly bounded to the Latin model.

The Latin influence on Old High German syntax can be recognized not only in translations regarding the religious sphere, but also in the late Old High German instructional translated language of Notker of 1000, where a lean syntactic peculiarity is represented by the widely reproduction of Latin *Accusativus cum infinitivo* in the Old High German syntax, where the infinitive can refer to the present or to the past, which is already present within the previously analyzed translation of “Tatian”.

Evidence of this construction can be also found in the following example based on the translation of Boethius’ Latin “De consolatione Philosophiae” (Eilers 2002), as it can be noticed from the underlined components of the sentences:

lat.: *Putasne hunc mundum agi temerariis et furtivis casibus?*

*An credis inesse ei ullum regimen rationis?*

ohg.: *Uuânest tu dise uuêrlt-lichen geskihte uerlâzene uâren. ûnde stûzzelingun?*

*Âlde uuânest tu dar âna uuêsen dehêina rihti âfter rêdo?*<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, from the enumerated examples of translations from a Latin model into Old High German, it can be generally affirmed that in the Old High German period became apparent yet, that the Latin influence had an impact on almost all linguistic level of the German language (Von Polenz 2020, 10). Moreover, in conclusion to this chapter, it can be asserted that, because of the relationships established between the Romans and the Germanic peoples and in light of the enumerated borrowings and examples, Old High German represents the product of these interactions since within it there is clear evidence of lexical, semantic, and syntactical interferences from Latin.

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<sup>28</sup> Notker 1986, 29



## CHAPTER 4

### **4.1 Interferences within a language: an analysis of the phenomena from a language teaching perspective**

The previous chapter dealt with the topic of Latin interferences within Old High German vocabulary and syntax, which is the main theme of this dissertation. However, since the work here proposed represents the final dissertation of a master's degree in Language Sciences, which is based on a language education curriculum, it is worthy to analyze interference phenomena from a language teaching perspective.

First of all, it appears necessary to consider the interference phenomenon in general terms, starting from the related notions of language change and language contact. Secondly, the interference phenomena will be analyzed from a language teaching point of view, considering the acquisition of second and foreign languages and its consequences on learners.

As already mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, every language is not pure, but a mixture of many languages, due to the influences and relations that have been existing between people belonging to different populations and coming from different countries. As consequence of the contacts with other languages, a language is influenced from them and underwent changes.

Language change refers to the phenomenon by which permanent alterations are made in the characteristics and the use of a language over time. Moreover, it is a widely investigated and intriguing topic in linguistics, which can be studied from several angles: extinct languages can be reconstructed, languages can be classified to language families, trends in grammatical and lexical changes can be recognized and historical conclusions can be drawn from language change.

However, the most noteworthy question about language change concerns its cause. Indeed, the way languages change offer insights into the nature of languages themselves and the possible answers to why languages change can offer an overview about the way languages are used in society and how they are acquired by individuals and may also reveal information about their internal organization.

According to Aitchison (2001), « For centuries people have speculated about the causes of language change. The problem is not one of thinking up possible causes, but of deciding which to take seriously. [...] Part of the problem is that there are several different causative factors at work, not only in language as a whole but also in any one change. [...] We can begin by dividing proposed causes of change into two broad categories. On the one hand, there are external sociolinguistic factors — that is, social factors outside the language system. On the other hand, there are

internal psycholinguistic ones — that is, linguistic and psychological factors which reside in the structure of the language and the minds of the speakers » (Aitchison 2001).

Therefore, according to linguists, language change can be caused from internal and external factors: since object of analysis are the changes within Old High German vocabulary and syntax due to Latin influence, it can be affirmed that this dissertation focuses on changes caused by external factors, referring, in particular, to changes caused by other languages. Related to that, the concept of language contact needs to be mentioned.

The notion of language contact refers to a situation in which speakers from two speech communities are in contact with each other. Depending on the way they interact, there are many types of language contact. Indeed, it involves two factors: the use of two or more languages and the place, and sometimes the time, in which those languages establish relations. Weinreich (1966) combined these two aspects, as he affirmed that « two or more languages will be said in contact if they are used alternatively by the same persons. [...] The practice of alternatively using two languages will be called bilingualism, and the persons involved, bilingual ». <sup>29</sup>

As asserted by Weinreich (1966), language contact can be strictly associated to bilingualism: indeed, a condition that is normally considered necessary in order to language contact to be present is that there are bilingual speakers.

In light of this and from the considerations presented in the previous chapters of this dissertation about linguistic interference of Latin on Old High German vocabulary and syntax, it can be affirmed that for many Germanic peoples, especially for those living in the border area of the Germania, Latin represented a second language, and it can therefore be assumed that there was evidence of bilingualism.

The concept of bilingualism covered a wide area of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research. Indeed, it has been noted how in a situation of bilingualism, which involves the compresence of two different linguistic codes, it can happen that the two languages involved major for different scopes: in the personal sphere will be used one language, whether in public the other language will be used to communicate.

The bilingual individual is led to modify the elements of one of the two languages according to the elements belonging to the other language.

However, it can also be stated that two languages can interact with each other without necessarily having to presume that the speakers or the community are bilingual: indeed, it is sufficient that there

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<sup>29</sup> Weinreich 1966, 1. Although the reference is outdated, it was employed as the concepts expressed by Weinreich are accepted and quoted by many contemporary authors and represent one of the cornerstones of linguistics.

are relations between different communities such as a language is present within a community that speaks another language.

In this sense, languages of today's world are mainly in contact with the English language and conveyed its influence, without there being a real English knowledge from the speakers. Indeed, the contact with the English language will be object of analysis in the didactic section of this chapter, where a series of activities focusing on English influence within Italian vocabulary will be proposed to secondary school children, in order to raise their awareness about language contact and the resulting presence of interferences within languages.

Language contact is a common and widespread situation which is considered as normal for the entirety of the speaking community: whenever a population speaking one language deals with a population speaking another language, it can be said that there is a situation of language contact.<sup>30</sup>

Later, more recent studies led to outline a more veiled and articulated concept of contact, which can be considered from a double perspective of speakers or languages (Berruto 2009, 3-34).

From the speakers' point of view, two or more languages are in contact when they are simultaneously mastered to some degree by one or more speakers. From the languages' point of view, one or more linguistic systems are in contact when they interact, that is when their structures are exposed one to the action of the other. The place of contact can be both the single speaker neither the social community as a whole, as stated from Thomason (2001), who affirmed that the linguistic contact concerns the use of one or more languages in the same place and at the same time (Thomason 2001, 1).

In addition, dealing with the sociolinguistic aspects and consequences of the contact between languages, it can be also affirmed that, depending on many social and cultural factors, the contact can be horizontal or vertical, also known as asymmetric.

Horizontal contact refers to a case in which the two languages have the same distinction and a comparable socioeconomic and cultural relevance, whether vertical or asymmetric contact refers to a case in which the two languages have different prestige, and one has a dominant position over the other within society.

Moreover, contact can be constant and lasting for centuries, or temporary and occurring for a reduced period of time or be just momentary and tied to specific events.

Furthermore, it can be widespread and intensive, when the relations between the individuals speaking different languages are various, dense, and incessant, whether it can be sporadic and casual, when the relations between the speakers are not many and limited to essential communicative situations.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/contatto-linguistico\\_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/contatto-linguistico_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/)

<sup>31</sup> [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/contatto-linguistico\\_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/contatto-linguistico_%28Enciclopedia-dell%27Italiano%29/)

The intersection of these factors generates different types of situations of contact (Dal Negro and Guerini 2007). In every situation of language contact, one language influences somehow the other. The relations can be unidirectional, when just one of the two languages, known as receiving language, received the influence of the other, or bidirectional, when the languages influence each other and reciprocally exchange linguistic materials, which is the case of Old High German and Latin.

Language contact generates linguistic phenomena, among which the most renowned are borrowings and interferences.

The more immediate and recognizable method through which a word moves from one language to another is borrowing. As asserted by Gusmani (1993), in fairness it should be designated ‘borrowing’ any phenomenon of interference, that is any phenomenon connected with the contact and the reciprocal influence of different languages. Indeed, the improvement of any linguistic tradition under the influence of another language constitutes a case of borrowing (Gusmani 1993, 9).

Moreover, according to Dardano, borrowings are present when our language uses and ends up assuming a linguistic trait which already existed within another language and that had not acknowledgement in ours.<sup>32</sup>

However, since borrowings were analyzed in the third chapter of this dissertation, as already revealed the present chapter will focus on interferences, taking into consideration these phenomena firstly in general terms and then from a language teaching perspective through the presentation of didactic activities, in order to raise awareness about these phenomena in secondary school children.

The notion of linguistic interference refers to the action of a linguistic system on another and the consequences caused by the contact between languages. Interference is the process through which two different codes overlap and intersect in the linguistic act of an individual. Borrowings are the possible consequence of this process, that occur when the element object of interference becomes integrated part of the linguistic system that was subjected to influence. Therefore, borrowings refer the outcome of contact, whether interferences refer to the phenomena underway (Gusmani 1993, 138).

The term ‘interference’ has, in fact, a double meaning: it designates lexical, phonological, morphological, or syntactic borrowings from a linguistic system to another, just as the mutations activated within the linguistic competence of the speaker from the contact between two or more languages. Particularly, language contact occurs when speakers of different languages interact and their languages influence one another, leading to a transfer of linguistic features (Matras 2020), which is the case of Latin and Old High German.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Dardano 1996, 256. Although the reference is outdated, the author offers an interesting contribution concerning borrowings that is worthy to be mentioned in the present dissertation.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Indeed, in his work Weinreich (1966) examined the interference phenomena that generate from the contact between languages within the competence of the same speaker, and asserted that « those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e. as a result of language contact, will be referred to as interference phenomena. [...] The term interference implies the rearrangement of patterns that result from the introduction of foreign elements into the phonemic system, a large part of the morphology and syntax, and some areas of the vocabulary » (Weinreich 1966, 1).

Moreover, the linguist continued with the definition of interference through a metaphor: « In speech, interference is like sand carried by a stream; in language, it is the sedimented sand deposited on the bottom of a lake. [...] In speech, it occurs anew in the utterances of bilingual speaker as a result of his personal knowledge of the other tongue. In language, we find interference phenomena which, having frequently occurred in the speech of bilinguals, have become habitualized and established. Their use is no longer dependent on bilingualism » (Weinreich 1966, 11). In this sense, interferences are not limited to second language learning but constitutes a phenomenon that characterizes also foreign language learning.

Furthermore, it is generally accepted that interference is one factor of the diachronic mutation of languages. In case of intense and prolonged contact and in situations of marked difference of status between languages, the interference can cause even deeper effects, until the subordinate language is displaced. An example of deep interference is that caused by the development of mixed languages in situations of commercial contact or between people without a common language, which is the case of the linguistic interference of Latin on Old High German, that is object of analysis in the second and third chapter of this dissertation.

After a brief and general overview about the interference phenomena, it is worthy to consider linguistic interference phenomena from a language teaching perspective, focusing in particular on the acquisition of second and foreign languages and its consequences on learners, which is relevant for teachers, as they embody the facilitators that offer support and advice when needed from learners.

From a language teaching point of view, it can be asserted that the contact between languages occupies a significant position within the interests of glottologists. Certainly, it does not represent a new topic, but it deserves to be constantly topical as it concerns a phenomenon which continuously appears in the most different situations and represents one of the themes that mainly offer causes for reflection for linguists of all leanings and interests.

However, from the studies concerning interference phenomena, it is revealed a representation of the linguistic reality which can't get along with the sketchiness with whom many researchers work in this area of research. As affirmed by Gusmani, many manuals of general linguistics describe languages

as systems, whether the more their real nature is analyzed without patterns and preconceptions, the more they reveal to be unrelated to an apparent systematic approach. Therefore, the author affirmed that if the study of interferences can contribute to reveal these *idola*, then this is a justification to dedicate attention to interferences at the present time too (Gusmani 1993, 2).

The linguistic interference is a field of research that involves many linguists who confront this topic with different purposes and provide subject of in-depth analysis in many directions.

In particular, second language acquisition researchers have for long been interested in the phenomenon of cross-linguistic influence or language transfer, expressions referring to linguistic interference which were first proposed in the 1980s.

According to Odlin (1989), language transfer refers to « the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired ».

<sup>34</sup> Indeed, cross-linguistic influence depends on interlingual identifications, that is on the judgments that something in the native language and something in the target language are similar.

Moreover, it can be assumed that transfer occurs in the process of second language acquisition, as evidenced the case proposed in the third chapter of this dissertation, focusing on Latin influence on Old High German, where it can be presumed that Latin represented a second language for many Germanic peoples.

Related to second language acquisition, the notions of positive and negative transfer need to be mentioned. Indeed, in the cases in which the first and the second language were different, it was assumed that the learner's first knowledge would have interfered with the knowledge of the second language, functioning negatively, whether in the cases in which the first and the second language were similar, the first language would have aided the second language acquisition process, functioning positively.

In order to better understand these assumptions, the following chapter will consider didactic instruments to study interference phenomena, which can represent an important tool for teachers, who can help learners to be aware of interferences and use them as a facilitation in language learning.

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<sup>34</sup> Odlin 1989, 27. Although the reference is outdated, the author offers important considerations about the analyzed phenomena, which are worthy to be mentioned in this dissertation.

## 4.2 Interferences within a language: an analysis of didactic tools to study these phenomena

The analysis of didactic instruments to study interference phenomena has to be considered of great relevance as they can represent an aid for teachers to understand and manage those interferences which constitutes a problem for learners, converting them to an opportunity to learn and acquire second or foreign languages.

A first step in this sense was made by Lado (1957), who developed the “Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis”, which compares the linguistic system of two or more languages and bases on the main difficulties in learning a new language, which are caused by interferences from the first language. The Contrastive analysis was developed for understanding errors committed by learners in the light of the rules of the languages he speaks. Indeed, the hypothesis is grounded on the assumption that « The student who comes into contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him and those elements that are different will be difficult ». <sup>35</sup> Therefore, Contrastive Analysis gained relevance to investigate learner’s errors in the field of second language acquisition.

One of the reasons for learners’ errors is the interference of their mother tongue, which can be described as positive and negative transfer between the mother tongue and the target language. Related to that, it is worthy to consider transfer theory as one of the ways of contrastive analysis in second and foreign language learning. Crystal (1992) stated that transfer is « the influence of linguistic features of one language upon another, in such contexts as bilingualism and language learning ». <sup>36</sup> As previously affirmed, there are two types of transfer: negative transfer reflects the difficulties encountered by learners in the use of the target language, which can occur when the target language is used in conjunction with the other language, whether positive transfer reflects the facilitation of language learning, as the similarities between the two languages comes to the forward. Moreover, the greater is the difference between the two languages, the greater the negative interference can be used by the speakers. On the other hand, the closer the two languages are to each other, the more positive the transfer can be noticed.

Therefore, it can be considered linguistic interference as the transfer of the mother tongue to the target language (Odlin 2001, 56).

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<sup>35</sup> Lado 1957, 2. Although the reference is outdated, the hypothesis developed by the author is worthy to be mentioned in this dissertation as it constitutes one of cornerstone of linguistics research.

<sup>36</sup> Crystal 1992, 393. Although the reference is outdated, its contribution about the definition of ‘transfer’ and its relationship with bilingualism is worthy of being mentioned in this dissertation.

Marton (1981) braced the interference of the mother tongue, arguing that « taking a psychological point of view, we can say that there is never peaceful coexistence between two language systems in the learner, but rather constant warfare, and that warfare is not limited to the moment of cognition, but continues during the period of storing newly learnt ideas in memory ». <sup>37</sup>

However, according to Wardhaugh (1970), « The claim that the best language-teaching materials are based on a contrast of the two competing linguistic systems has long been a popular one in language teaching. It exists in strong and weak versions, the strong one raising from evidence from the availability of some kind of metatheory of contrastive analysis and the weak from evidence from language interference. The strong version of the hypothesis is untenable and even the weak version creates difficulties for the linguist. Recent advances in linguistic theory have led some people to claim that the hypothesis is no longer useful in either the strong or the weak version ». <sup>38</sup>

As stated by the linguist, Contrastive Analysis can be illustrated in two versions: a strong version and a weak version. The strong version embraces the idea that it is possible to contrast the system of a language with the system of another language in order to predict the difficulties that a speaker of the second language will have to face when learning the first language and to create teaching materials to help him learn the language, as asserted by Lado in the preface to “Linguistics across cultures”: « The plan of the book rests on the assumption that we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student » (Lado 1957, vii). On the other hand, the weak version embraces an approach which starts with the evidence provided by linguistic interference and uses this evidence to explain differences and similarities between the language systems (Wardhaugh 1970, 124-126).

However, Contrastive Analysis has been criticized as it was considered inaccurate to predict difficulties. Indeed, since every learning process is individual, it is difficult to make predictions.

Nevertheless, the goal of Contrastive Analysis is developing the foreign language learning and language learner’s errors are the results of first language interference, that can be avoided or corrected if errors occur. With reference to that, Fisiak (1981) stated that « the value and importance of Contrastive Analysis lies in its ability to indicate potential areas of interference and errors. Not all errors are the result of interference. Psychological and pedagogical, as well as other extra linguistic factors contribute to the formation of errors ». <sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Marton 1981, 150. Although the reference is outdated, his position about interference of the mother tongue is worthy to be mentioned in this dissertation.

<sup>38</sup> Wardhaugh 1970, 123. Although the reference is outdated, the linguist offers an interesting presentation of the distinction between weak and strong version of Contrastive Analysis, worthy of being mentioned in the present work.

<sup>39</sup> Fisiak 1981, 7. Although the reference is outdated, the author provided a stimulating perspective about the association of Contrastive and interference, which is worthy to be mentioned in the present dissertation.

Indeed, learner's errors have long been of interest for second and foreign language researchers. It is inevitable that all learners commit errors. However, the process can be impeded through Error Analysis: the steps that learners follow get researchers and language teachers realize that if errors are analyzed, the process of language acquisition shall be understood. Therefore, the analysis of errors became a field of linguistics and the field of language teaching benefit from its findings, including error analysis.

Error Analysis refers to a linguistic analysis that studies cross-linguistic influence and its occurrence in acquisition situations, in whose establishing researchers have made many progresses.

During the 40s, Error Analysis was influenced by the behaviorist theory of language learning, as it was considered that those errors committed by learners were the result of the interference of their first language rules. Indeed, according to the behaviorist theory of language, language learning is a habit formation and the errors in foreign and second language learning are due to the hindrance of habits and rules formed during the first language learning, which resist and interfere in the process of forming habits in foreign and second language. Therefore, according to the behaviorist theory, learners' errors are the result of the interference of the first language.<sup>40</sup>

Today, according to the Center for advanced research on language acquisition, « error analysis is a method used to document the errors that appear in learner language, determine whether those errors are systematic, and (if possible) explain what caused them. [...] An error analysis should focus on errors that are systematic violations of pattern in the input to which the learners have been exposed».

<sup>41</sup> Therefore, it can be affirmed that Error Analysis describes how learning occurs by examining the learner's output.

Before analyzing it, the distinction between error and mistake should be mentioned, in order to better understand Error Analysis. The difference was proposed by Corder (1974), who stated that errors are the result of incomplete learning and linguistic incompetency of the learners, and they cannot be self-corrected. On the other hand, mistakes can be self-corrected, as learners have knowledge of the correct linguistic form, and are the results of poor performance of language, which can be due to many factors, like careless and fatigue on the part of the learners.<sup>42</sup>

Researchers provided the following procedure of Error Analysis: the first step is the identification of all errors in a sample of learner language. Indeed, the collection of a massive sample of several

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<sup>40</sup> James 1989; 1998. Although the references are outdated, the author offered through his words an interesting overview of contrastive and error analysis that is worthy to be mentioned in this dissertation.

<sup>41</sup> [https://carla.umn.edu/learnerlanguage/error\\_analysis.html#:~:text=Error%20analysis%20is%20a%20method,possible%20explain%20what%20caused%20them.&text=An%20error%20analysis%20should%20focus,the%20learners%20have%20been%20exposed.](https://carla.umn.edu/learnerlanguage/error_analysis.html#:~:text=Error%20analysis%20is%20a%20method,possible%20explain%20what%20caused%20them.&text=An%20error%20analysis%20should%20focus,the%20learners%20have%20been%20exposed.)

<sup>42</sup> Corder 1974, 259. Although the reference is outdated, the distinction between errors and mistakes need to be mentioned in this dissertation in order to better understand the concept of 'error analysis'.

language use samples from a large number of learners is necessary condition to represent an entire population and, therefore, to obtain lists of possible errors common to many learners of a specific population.

Later, the second step is the explanation of errors, that is thinking about what might have caused errors. There are several causes involved: some errors could be due to native language transfer, some could be developmental, other could be induced errors caused by the way the teacher presented a given form.

Moreover, several factors were identified as influence on the types of errors learners make: Odlin (1989) identified three language factors and three learner factors: to the first category belong medium, that is written or oral production, genre, and content; on the other hand, to learner factors belong level of proficiency, mother tongue and language learning experience (Odlin 1989).

According to Corder (1974), « the study of errors is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and many give us indications as to the learning process » (Corder 1974, 125).

However, the linguist argued that Error Analysis should not cater for mistakes occurring when learners fail to perform their competence, as errors can be also found in native language production (Corder 1974, 122-154).

Furthermore, as Lightbown and Spada asserted, « ...while error analysis has the advantage of describing what learners actually do...it does not always give us clear insights into why they do it » (Lightbown and Spada 2013, 45).

Notwithstanding these criticisms, it is widely accepted that Error Analysis plays an important role in second and foreign language teaching, as it helps teachers in understanding the new ways of teaching by giving feedback on the errors learners made. Indeed, in analyzing errors produced by students, the teacher should take into consideration the possible presence of interferences from their mother tongue or from other languages they know and use, in order to make them understand the difference between these languages and use this interference as a tool for learn and understand their errors and their cause. For this reason, it is important that the teacher does not correct the student, providing him with right solution, but should help him thinking about why he made that error, noticing the influence of another language.

In conclusion to this section and before presenting the case study, it can be affirmed that the presented tools, that is Contrastive and Error analysis, represent interesting and useful tools to study interference phenomena, as they provide teachers with aids to notice interferences and errors in the students' linguistic performance.

Therefore, since interferences and errors are decisive in language learning, in the following paragraph will be presented a case study, whose purpose is to raise students' awareness about linguistic interference and language contact in class.

### **4.3 A case study: raising awareness about linguistic interference and language contact in class**

Before presenting the case study proposed, it is first worthy to consider the role that languages have in the present world.

The importance of language learning is evident in the modern condition of globalization, a phenomenon that interests on global scale every state and implies the use of foreign languages in scholar environment for a future need in the world of work.

Language has always been a cultural phenomenon, a significant medium of communication that facilitates the relation between people that do not belong to the same culture and do not come from the same country. Indeed, the linguistic competence is important for the integration of an individual in a multicultural society, as it allows individuals to come closer to cultures and lifestyles different from that they are used to. Moreover, since globalization encouraged the global population to the creation of a more linked world, at the base of which there must be communication, the need of linguistic knowledge and competence intervened.

For the reasons just presented, the communication through foreign languages represents one of the eight key competences defined within the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which aims to promote a positive attitude in school, where the concept of 'positive attitude' comprehends the appreciation of cultural diversity and the interest and curiosity towards foreign languages and intercultural communication.

Therefore, language teaching and learning are essential as they guarantee to European citizens an opportunity to freely move, work, and learn in Europe and in the world. As a consequence, this encourages employment and economic growth and contributes to the reciprocal comprehension of other countries and cultures. Moreover, it is fundamental to reduce linguistic barriers and lack of language skills, which impede the attendance to social life.<sup>43</sup>

In this sense, the concept of plurilingualism needs to be mentioned. Plurilingualism refers to a situation of a community or a territory in which, for its boundary position or its ethnic composition,

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<sup>43</sup> <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/it/pub/resources/tutorials/the-importance-of-communicatin.htm>

more than one language is used. Furthermore, it can also refer to the competence of an individual or an ethnic group to easily express using more languages.<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, the development of plurilingual education represents one of the Council of Europe's priorities. Since Europe is multilingual and in order to fulfill its social and cultural aims, it attempts to provide education adapted to the needs of plurilingual individuals, where understanding and experiencing languages and cultures can be both an aim of and a resource for quality education.

According to the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe, plurilingual education bases on the following key concepts: "a holistic view of languages in education", meaning that every language should not be considered as a separate entity, but through a global approach; "linguistic repertoires and partial competences", that is an individual learner should develop his own repertoires of the different languages he knows and uses; "bi- and plurilingual are normal and achievable by all", referring to the need of establishment of education systems that promote bilingualism and plurilingualism; "cognitive benefits of plurilingual education" that represent strong research evidence; "plurilingual approaches contribute to social integration", that is the plural approaches can encourage the development of openness and intercultural competences in learners; indeed, the final concept states « plurilingual competences are empowering for all learners ».<sup>45</sup>

The Italian school system is ever more plurilingual and, therefore, many documents were drawn up with the aim of promoting plurilingualism in school. Beside European documents, as CARAP (Cadre de référence pour les Approches Plurielles des Langues et des Cultures) or CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), Italian documents were drafted, in order to support the speaker of more languages in using all the languages he knows. The document that is worthy to be mentioned in this dissertation is *Linee guida per l'integrazione degli studenti stranieri*, namely guidelines for the integration of foreign learners, which aim to face the varied world of migrants and provide schools and educational institutions with tools and operational guidelines to adequately confront multiculturalism.

As can be understand from this document, the role of teachers, and, in particular, the role of language teachers, is essential: teaching a language means offering the foundations for the development of relations of mutual respect, observing and considering the language as a tool of relation and relations between languages, which do not have a complex connection one with the other. Moreover, the plurilingual background needs incessant contextualization, because everyone interprets what happens on the basis of its linguistic and cultural frame of reference, and the plurilingual class isn't just the class in which students, sons of migrants, are present, but every class, because monolingual class does

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/plurilinguismo/>

<sup>45</sup> <https://www.ecml.at/Thematicareas/PlurilingualEducation/tabid/1631/Default.aspx>

not exist, by virtue of the fact that every student takes with him a linguistic repertoire shaped by all the languages he has come into contact with (Della Puppa 2020, 114). Indeed, as affirmed by Della Puppa, nobody is inhabited from one single language, but from the totality of languages known and used at different levels and for different purposes (Della Puppa 2020, 100). Moreover, Martinet argued that linguistic diversity starts from next door and often within one individual. To describe this condition, the author used a metaphor: Every individual is a battlefield, where linguistic types and habits, and, at the same time, a permanent source of linguistic interference fight against each other. Therefore, what is hastily called ‘language’ is actually an aggregate of millions of those microcosms (Weinreich 2008, 107-108).

Diversity constitutes a structural characteristic of today’s educational institutions and is fertile ground for the experimentation of didactic modalities that aim to promote plurilingualism, intercultural comparison and the meeting with the other and its diversity. Whether in the past plurilingualism was seen as an obstacle, a barrier that impeded learning, today linguistic diversity is represented from an institutional, national, and international level as an added value and an opportunity to develop new and essential competences and learning for all (Della Puppa 2020, 118-119).

A first step toward the promotion of plurilingualism in class can be made raising awareness about linguistic interferences, as it can be an interesting tool for students to understand the concept of language contact and to make them aware of the fact that languages are not pure but contain a series of influences deriving from the contact with other languages, under which different reasons lies, also depending on the time period in which the contact took or takes place.<sup>46</sup>

As already mentioned, language contact and interferences can be due to migratory flows. Evidence of this was, considering the ancient time, the case of Latin and Old High German, analyzed in the preceding chapters of this dissertation. Considering a more recent time period, typical situations of contact in which the Italian language is involved are migratory situations, evidence of which is Italian-American, an Italian variety with Americanized vocabulary, deriving from the Italian emigration into the United States of America.

Therefore, starting from these considerations about language contact and the presence of interferences within a language, students can also understand the importance of knowing more languages and the relations and causes that lie behind their development in time.

With this purpose, a didactic proposal was presented in the following subparagraph, which aims to raise awareness about linguistic interference within Italian vocabulary and the contact with other languages in secondary school children.

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<sup>46</sup> See Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

### **4.3.1 A didactic proposal to raise awareness about linguistic interference within Italian vocabulary in secondary school children**

As Latin represented an essential medium of communication in the ancient age, dominating an extended empire and influencing other languages vocabulary, as evidenced in the previous chapters of this dissertation, it can be affirmed that English dominates the communication in today's world and influences our language with new terms and expressions that easily have become part of our vocabulary.

For this reason, the title conceived to denominate the linguistic workshop is "Lingue in contatto" ("Languages in contact") and the didactic activities proposed to secondary school children are created with the purpose of raising awareness about linguistic interferences that Italian vocabulary presents nowadays.

However, although in the preceding chapter of this dissertation lexical and syntactic interferences were analyzed, the present case study focuses only on lexical interferences, since the time available to deliver the didactic laboratory was limited and, as it is addressed to secondary school students, the lesson represents only a brief and general overview of interferences phenomena, which will not be analyzed in detail.

In the following subparagraph will be described and analyzed the activities proposed to children belonging to the second class of the secondary school in Colceresa (VI), Italy. The majority of students involved in this case study speak Italian as a first language and, in few cases, as a second language. Moreover, every student belonging to the class learns English as a foreign language.

The lesson proposed had a duration of about 120 minutes, which were necessary to carry out every activity within the lesson. As already introduced, its aim was to bring secondary school students closer to the awareness that a language is never pure but contains in it a series of influences or interferences deriving from the contact with other languages, which must be considered an enrichment.

Very often young learners think that a language is pure and, therefore, such as to not admit interferences from different languages. Actually, taking as evidence the Italian language, it is not difficult to notice English words that were assimilated within Italian vocabulary.

To pursue this objective, this lesson based on the didactic organizational model called UDA ('unità di apprendimento' in Italian), a learning unit organized in four phases, namely motivation – globality – analysis – summary, and is built from the student's perspective, who becomes protagonist because he discovers and reflects through the inductive method.

Considering the background of the case study, the lesson was presented during the Italian lesson and proposed using the Italian language, since students could express some difficulty and therefore show

less interest in the case in which the lesson was proposed using the English language, as they have a low English level and for this reason not a suitable linguistic level that allows to debate about more complex themes. Moreover, the presented lesson dealt with borrowings from other languages which were included within Italian vocabulary, that proves therefore to be the most appropriate language to debate the topic under consideration.

### **4.3.2 Activities**

The first phase of the lesson is the motivational phase, which, as the denomination suggests, aims to invite students to take part to the learning unit and raises interest recalling their previous knowledge. To pursue this objective, the lesson starts with a brief and informal conversation concerning the languages students know. Indeed, it is expected that within the class there are also foreign students, not only Italian ones. I ask them what language they use to talk with parents, relatives, and friends, if they like their mother tongue, if they would like to study other languages in addition to the languages they study in school...

With the purpose of offering an informal conversation, I start telling my personal experience with languages, relating about the love I show for the languages I studied, and why they are so important for me. In doing so, I put them at ease, as in a light conversation with friends, and, at the same time, I indirectly introduce the theme of the lesson I am going to present.

Moreover, I gradually write on the blackboard what they tell me using key words, so that every student could have an overview of the languages spoken within the class, including English and French, which they study as foreign languages in school. This first phase will last around 10 minutes. Following the motivational phase, the gathering phase, also called globality, is developed: its purpose is to comprehend a new text through exercises and activities. In order to do that, students are presented with a brief text, written in Italian, which will be displayed below.

The present text represents a tool to introduce the topic of this section, created for secondary school children. Indeed, although it is easy to read and does not include difficult words, as the aim was to create a scrolling text, and, therefore, to allow students to focus on the foreign words within it.

Students are asked to read the text once, silently and on their own, and to ask the teacher whether they encounter difficult words. In this case, I am at their disposal to clarify them.

Mara nel weekend deve andare a Barcellona a trovare l'amica Sofia, che conosce da tutta la vita.

Sofia lavora in un negozio di make-up di un noto brand italiano e ha deciso di invitare Mara per passare del tempo assieme, facendole provare qualche nuovo prodotto e fare nuove esperienze. Infatti, ha organizzato tutte le attività per il fine settimana assieme: sapendo che Mara adora i gadget, sabato andranno ad una fiera sulla cosmesi e le farà provare nuovi trucchi e creme. In Spagna la cura della pelle è estremamente importante e Sofia vuole far provare a Mara qualche nuovo prodotto, dato che lei ha la pelle secca e molto sensibile. Poi pranzeranno in un bar lì vicino. La sera poi andranno in un pub che offre una grande varietà di birre e buona musica. Un'altra passione di Mara, infatti, è ballare. Lei adora i balli latino-americani e Sofia ha già in mente un posto carino dove portarla.

Domenica sarà invece dedicata al relax: passeranno la giornata alla spa a farsi coccolare tra massaggi e sauna e la sera andranno al cinema a vedere il nuovo film con Lady Gaga.

Sofia ama avere il controllo su tutto ed essere organizzata... Non sa però che la sua amica ha dimenticato la valigia a casa e che perderà il volo, non potendo così raggiungerla a Barcellona!

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After the reading, there are asked to do a comprehension activity, that will take them no more than five minutes, as it is very brief and undemanding. Indeed, the activity was thought to be as quickly as possible, since it is included in the first and general phase of the proposed lesson, which focuses on a general understanding of the text, and not an analysis of it.

The activity consists in five multiple choice questions, in which students should choose the correct answers among the three proposed, as follows:

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<sup>47</sup> English translation: In the weekend, Mara shall go to Barcelona to see her friend Sofia, who knows her whole life. Sofia works in a make-up shop belonging to a famous Italian brand and decided to invite Mara to spend some time together, allowing her to discover some new product and have new experiences. Indeed, she organized every activity for the weekend together: knowing that Mara loves gadgets, on Saturday they are going to a cosmetic fair, and she will try make-up and creams. In Spain the skincare is extremely important, and Sofia would like to let Mara try some new products, as she has dry and sensible skin. Then they are going to have lunch in bar nearby. On Saturday night, they are going in a pub which offer a great variety of beers and good music. Another Mara's passion is dancing. Sunday means day of relax: they are going in a spa all day and on Sunday night they are going to the cinema and see Lady Gaga's new movie. Sofia loves making plans and being organized with everything... But she doesn't know that her friend forgot the luggage at home and will miss the flight, and therefore she will not join her in Barcelona!

- a. Mara
  - va una settimana a Madrid.
  - lavora a Barcellona.
  - va a trovare un'amica nel weekend.
  
- b. Sofia
  - lavora a Barcellona in un negozio di make-up.
  - fa provare prodotti a una fiera.
  - lavora in una fiera sul make-up.
  
- c. Ha organizzato il fine settimana
  - Mara.
  - Sofia.
  - entrambe.
  
- d. Mara
  - adora ballare nei pub.
  - adora i gadget e ballare.
  - adora la birra e ballare.
  
- e. Domenica
  - andranno alla spa e al cinema.
  - sarà una giornata dedicata alla cultura.
  - sarà una giornata impegnativa.

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I propose then a revision *in plenum* of the first comprehension activity.

Concerning this phase, I also prepare an additional comprehension activity, where students shall fulfill a grid with key words regarding time, place and activity concerning the text already read and that, therefore, does not demand writing skills, resulting undemanding. The activity proposed is the following:

| TEMPO               | LUOGO | ATTIVITÀ                  |
|---------------------|-------|---------------------------|
| Sabato (giornata)   |       |                           |
|                     | Pub   |                           |
| Domenica (giornata) |       |                           |
|                     |       | Vedere film con Lady Gaga |

<sup>48</sup> English translation: a. Mara: goes to Barcelona for a week / works in Barcelona / goes to Barcelona to see a friend; b. Sofia: works in Barcelona in a make-up shop / recommends beauty products in a fair / works in a cosmetic fair; c. Organizes the weekend: Mara / Sofia / both of them; d. Mara: loves dancing in pubs / loves gadgets and dancing / loves beer and dancing; e. On Sunday: they are going to a spa and to the cinema / is going to be a cultural day / is going to be a hard and exhausting day.

[Solutions: a 3; b 1; c 2; d 2; e 1]

Later, I present a final activity of comprehension, to develop verbally or in written form, asking them “*At the end, Sofia and Mara are going to conclude every activity Sofia proposed?*”, justifying their answer:

|   |
|---|
| <p>Alla fine, riusciranno a portare a termine ogni attività proposta da Sofia?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sì                      <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Perché?</p> <hr/> <hr/> |
|---|

The second phase of this learning unit, which last around 45 minutes, is the analysis phase. Indeed, it refers to the phase in which functions and objectives of the language are identified and students have an active role, as they are asked to develop a deeper understanding of the text and its lexis.

Considering the activity proposed in the motivational phase, I ask students to search within the text we read if there are foreign words, that should be replaced by other words, and I highlight or underline them. I am expected that they will immediately notice that there are English words within the text and that these words could be replaced by Italian synonyms.

In case they do not notice them, I’ll propose an activity in which they are asked to connect English terms present in the text with their corresponding Italian terms or, alternatively, to write an Italian definition of each English term. The first alternative could be proposed as follows:

|         |                  |
|---------|------------------|
| weekend | bar, locale      |
| make-up | centro benessere |
| brand   | riposo           |
| gadget  | trucco           |
| pub     | omaggio          |
| relax   | fine settimana   |
| spa     | marchio          |

The purpose of this activity is, indeed, to make them aware of the fact that today we use many English words that became part of our vocabulary and, although we use them, we do not think about the fact that we are using English words, that are easily replaceable with their corresponding Italian synonyms.

Then, I suggest an activity in which students took an active role in giving a definition to English words commonly used also in Italy, as follows:

|                |
|----------------|
| Teenager _____ |
| Snack _____    |
| Cash _____     |
| Fitness _____  |
| Gossip _____   |
| Look _____     |
| Okay _____     |
| Ticket _____   |
| Selfie _____   |
| Party _____    |

During the revision of the activity, I ask them if they have ever used these terms and on which occasion.

Then, guiding them to reflect on the fact that a language is never pure, I ask them some focused questions: What language is this? Why are they present within Italian vocabulary? Why do we use them instead of using their Italian correspondents? Can we say that they became part of our daily vocabulary? What other foreign words do we daily use? Can you think about that?

I write on the blackboard what they answer me. Then, considering what emerges, I ask them, in their opinion, what language influences the most today's Italian vocabulary. It is expected that some students answer that English have a significant influence on the Italian language.

After having clarified that these terms belong to Italian vocabulary but are of English origin, I ask students if, in their opinion, a language can be defined as *pure*, that is without interference from other languages, or *impure*, that is it includes foreign words within its vocabulary.

Then, I request what can cause this influence, thinking about not only the present and considering not only the Italian language. Indeed, as they study history at school, I expect that they studied migration phenomena. Indeed, since contacts between populations speaking different languages have always existed and led to a reciprocal linguistic influence, interferences are phenomena that have always been present within a language and, therefore, did not concern only the latest stages of language development.

As usual, I write their answers and considerations on the blackboard, reporting also how many students think that linguistic borrowings have one or the other cause:

A blackboard with white text listing causes for linguistic borrowings: Commercio x 4, Interesse personale x1, Vicinanza (Stati vicini) x7, and ...

The listed causes refer to the possible ideas given by students, that are trade, personal interests, proximity (when there are neighboring states) ...

I explain that there more possible reasons for borrowings, reassuring them that there are not correct or wrong answers to the questions I posed, but only causes more frequent than others.

Finally, achieving the last activities and, therefore, the conclusion of this reflection about linguistic interference, I ask them if they have ever asked themselves where a word comes from. Since the lesson is designed for secondary school students, it is expected that they reply in the negative. Therefore, I propose them a didactic and interactive game in which they must guess the origin of some words. Using the free-game based learning platform Kahoot! I will organize students in groups of four and propose them a challenge: they shall guess the origin of the words appearing on the screen, clicking on the right answer from their smartphone.

Alternatively, if every student does not have his own smartphone, it could be proposed a game like Kahoot!, but without electronic devices, in which a word is written on the blackboard and students must guess its origin from the alternatives proposed. The group of students that will win is that which correctly answers to the majority of questions in the shortest time possible.

The ten questions created using Kahoot! platform are the following ones:

1. *Ciao* comes from...

- a. Latin *sclavus*
- b. Venetian *s'ciavo*
- c. Chinese *shiao*

2. *Bistecca* comes from...

- a. English *beef steak*
- b. Spanish *besteca*
- c. Latin *bisteccus*

3. *Mutande* comes from...

- a. French *mutant*
- b. Latin *mutandis*
- c. Spanish *mudandas*

4. *Pizza* comes from...

- a. Latin *pissa*
- b. Germanic *pizzo* or *bizzo*
- c. Neapolitan *pinsa*

5. *Pigiama* comes from...

- a. Spanish *pijama*
- b. English *pyjamas*
- c. Latin *pigamus*

6. *Crema* comes from...

- a. Latin *cremus*
- b. German *Creme*
- c. French *crème*

7. *Arancia* comes from...

- a. Spanish *naranja*
- b. Latin *arangia*
- c. Arabic *narangi*

8. *Blu* comes from...

- a. German *blau*
- b. Latin *blavus*
- c. French *bleu*

9. *Burro* comes from...

- a. Latin *butyrum*
- b. French *burre*
- c. German *Butter*

10. *Benzina* comes from...

- a. English *petrol*
- b. German *Benzin*
- c. Spanish *bencina*

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At the end of the game, I ask students to notice that the appeared words are not foreign words as in the text proposed in the previous activities, but Italian words with foreign origin, which were adapted or translated. Evidence of this is the English word *beef steak*, which were adapted and in Italian became *bistecca*.

The final phase, that lasts 25 minutes, concerns the synthesis of the work, where students can put into practice what they discover. Indeed, the synthesis will take place when students solve a problem and create something. In order to do this, students are divided in groups of two or three and conduct research about the origin of terms, the period in which the term was acquired and the reason why the term object of research was acquired within Italian vocabulary.

As the time available is not so much, I ask them to write a few lines, not a long text, and to present the discovery to the class. In order to guide them in the research, I integrate the activity with a diagram they can follow, as the following one:

PAROLA: \_\_\_\_\_

ORIGINE: la parola \_\_\_\_\_ proviene dal  
(tedesco/spagnolo/francese/inglese/ecc.) \_\_\_\_\_, che significa  
\_\_\_\_\_.

PERIODO: entra nel lessico italiano nel \_\_\_\_\_, perché  
\_\_\_\_\_ (MOTIVO: commercio, necessità, vicinanza con la lingua d'origine,  
non c'era una parola italiana per indicare quell'oggetto...).

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<sup>49</sup> Answers: 1 b ; 2 a ; 3 b ; 4 b ; 5 b ; 6 c ; 7 a ; 8 c ; 9 a ; 10 b

<sup>50</sup> English translation: Word: ... / Origin: the word ... comes from (Latin/German/Spanish/French/English/etc ...), meaning ... / Period: it became part of the Italian vocabulary in ... because ... (reason: trade / need / proximity to the original form / there was not an Italian word to indicate that object ...)

At the end of the activity, if there is available time, I ask them if they expected that the selected words had that origin and to vote the word with the most interesting origin.

### **4.3.3 Final remarks**

The lesson illustrated in the precedent paragraph was delivered on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2022 to the students attending the class 2B of the secondary school “A. De Gasperi” in Colceresa (VI), under the supervision of their Italian teacher, prof.ssa Ventinelli.

The class chosen to participate to this linguistic workshop is made up of 23 students, two of whom have special educational needs. Indeed, one student is certified for dysgraphia and dyscalculia and one student has A.D.D.

The teacher did not anticipate what the lesson would have been based on and leave me room to deliver it in the best way possible, without intervening.

During the one and a half hour in which the lesson was delivered, students demonstrated to be very interested and engaged in the activities proposed, as they easily interact and answer to all the questions they were asked, particularly in the motivational phase. Indeed, every student raised his hand and wanted to share with me his opinions, thoughts, and considerations about the topic, which I appreciated very much, as it should not be taken for granted that secondary school students voluntarily want to talk with an unknown teacher about a new argument.

From the conversational activity proposed at the beginning of the lesson, it emerged that every student has a specific linguistic background: some students have relatives in Germany or in Austria, who speak German, but they do not know German or they only able to recognize a few words; others have cousins whose partner lives or comes from South America and speak Spanish, so they tell me that their cousins have learned the foreign language in order to be able to interact with their boyfriend or girlfriend; one student comes from Romania and speaks Romanian at home, with his parents, and another student speaks English at home, as her father is British.

Moreover, they study English and French as foreign languages. Therefore, many languages were present in class.

They also prove to be curious about languages and language learning, as they expressed the wish to study German, Spanish, Russian, and Japanese in high school and at university. They understand and give a great importance to the learning of foreign languages nowadays, especially for trade and tourism, and they consider English to be essential to move around the world and be able to express yourself in different situations and places.

As already stated in the presentation of the lesson, I wrote all the languages on the blackboard so that everyone could have a clear idea of the foreign languages present in class and mentioned. Then, I asked them to read the text and answer to the questions of the first activity. They took a few minutes to read it, as it was a scrolling text, not difficult to read, and did not have difficulties in carrying out the exercise and we corrected it orally. Then, I asked them to complete the second and third activity and we corrected them together. Concerning these exercises, they neither had difficulties, but answer accurately.

Moving to the analysis phase, they noticed that there were foreign words within the text, and that those words were English borrowings. I asked them if they could replace them with Italian words and they answered me affirmatively. Therefore, I asked them to connect the English words present within the text with their correspondent synonym, activity that they considered simple and rapid. Indeed, they took a few minutes to complete the exercise. They told me that they recognize these English borrowings as they use them in their everyday life, for example they use the word 'brand' to talk about fashion and clothes, and the word 'weekend', which they mention at least once a day, because they dream of the weekend to arrive soon, as they do not have to go to school on Saturday and Sunday. The successive activity, the fifth one, was slightly more difficult for them, as in some cases not all students could think and find an appropriate synonym within the Italian vocabulary for the English words proposed. Therefore, during the correction they helped each other in finding an appropriate definition for the list of words.

After that, I guided through the core of the lesson, that is through the reflection about linguistic interferences within languages, focusing in particular on Italian and the English influence on its vocabulary, which is a current topic. They told me that, in their opinion and in light of what we have seen from the text and its related activities, English is the language that influences the most Italian vocabulary, as there are many words that we use every day speaking Italian and are of English origin. They also noticed that these words are carried within Italian vocabulary and borrowed without changing them, as we use them the same way they are used by English native speakers, except for the pronunciation of the right accent. Therefore, they agreed on the fact that these words can be said to be art of the Italian vocabulary, and, moreover, to our daily lexicon.

Thinking about other English words commonly used nowadays in Italy, they mentioned *internet, web, computer, PlayStation, game over, news, cool, fashion, hamburger, sandwich, email, basket, football, jeans, t-shirt*, and words defining musical genres.

When I asked them why these words entered within Italian vocabulary and we use them so frequently, they answered me that speaking English today is important, but also makes you cool and trendy.

Indeed, an elderly man would barely use those English words, although he probably knows its meaning.

We also talked about borrowings from other languages which are present within Italian vocabulary, and they mentioned *würstel* (from German *Wurst*) and *maionese* (from French *mayonnaise*).

Moreover, talking about the reason why words could be borrowed from another language, they listed me the following reasons: migration, fashion, music, culture, travel, internet, trade, school, and proximity of states.

After these considerations, I asked them if a language could be considered as *pure*, meaning without being influenced by other languages, or *impure*, that is influenced by other languages. Certainly, they did not hesitate and answered that a language can be defined as *impure*, as it is influenced by many languages for different reasons, as these linguistic interferences are the result of contacts established between languages and people speaking those languages.

Later, before proposing the interactive game Kahoot!, I repeated them that the English words seen in the activities proposed are words that were borrowed from Italian and remained the way they are also in English, without being adapted to the Italian vocabulary. However, this is not the case for every borrowing present within Italian language.

After having explained this, I presented them the game they were asked to do. In this activity, however, some difficulties were experienced. Indeed, the school internet connection was poor, and I solved using my personal computer, that fortunately I had brought in class. Moreover, students were not allowed to use their smartphone in class, so we had to play the game with my own device, on whose screen answers buttons were displayed: I used the interactive multimedia blackboard to show the students the questions and possible answers, they told me their answer choice, and I used my phone to click on the answer. In this way we could see only one answer since my device was the only one playing. However, they liked a lot the game and they asked me to play it again. Indeed, in the first match they answer correctly to five questions out of ten, whether in the second match they only get one question wrong, proof of the fact that they paid attention to the correct answers and had good memory.

Finally, for the last activity it was not possible to divide students in groups, due to the pandemic conditions and rules of the school. Therefore, since they could not also use their smartphone, we conducted brief research about the origin of eight words together, using my personal computer.

The words they chose are the following: *stella* (from Latin *stēlla*, calque from English star); *kiwi* (Maori word, initially acquired in English to indicate birds, then generically extended to denominate New Zealander); *discoteca* (compound of *disco-* and *-teca*, on example of French *discothèque*); *viaggio* (from Provençal *viatge*, Old French *veiage*, that is Latin *viaticum*, initially meaning ‘supply

for the journey’); *internet* (from English *inter[national]* or *inter[connected] net[works]*); *ketchup* (word of Malaysian origin); *zucchero* (from Arabic *sukkar*); and *brindisi* (from German *bring’s dir*, that is ‘I bring it to you’).

Then, they wanted also to know the origin of their names, almost all of Latin origin, as Giulia and Giovanni, with the exception of Belen, a Spanish word meaning Bethlehem.

Moreover, since we had not enough time to search for the time period and the reason why these words were borrowed, I asked them to complete the task during the next lesson with their Italian teacher.

In conclusion to this paragraph, it can be affirmed that the activities proposed raised interest in the students about the topic and subject of the lesson, that is the linguistic interferences within the Italian languages. Indeed, they did not restrict their concern to the English influence within Italian vocabulary but noticed that there are other languages responsible of interference, as evidenced from the words enumerated above in this paragraph.

Although there were some difficulties to face, as internet connection problems and the fact that students were not allowed to use their smartphones in class, all activities were concluded in the predetermined time and an alternative was found with the purpose of delivering the lesson in the best way possible and assuring students to understand its purpose and meaning.

Students demonstrated to be curious, engaged, and interested towards the activities proposed and pleased to have the opportunity to participate to the lesson, asking me to return in class and deliver another lesson in the future, which made me honored and thankful.

Moreover, they showed to be aware of the fact that languages are not pure, but contains within them interference phenomena, due to the contact established with other languages in difference periods of time and for different reasons, that include trade, need, proximity of states, migration, etc., as they participate with enthusiasm to every activity, asked questions if they did not understand, and followed the reasoning.

Taking into consideration the Italian language, it was easy for them to notice that it could not be defined as pure, as in our everyday life we use many words of foreign origin, often without thinking about where the words we are using come from. For this reason, it was important to bring students closer to the awareness of the presence of interference phenomena within a language, since they experience them every day, without being aware of that, and they could understand from their own the importance learning languages has in today’s world.

#### 4.4 Germanisms within Italian vocabulary: a didactic proposal

Since the present dissertation focuses on Latin influence on Old High German vocabulary and syntax, and since students were proposed a linguistic workshop dealing with interferences within Italian vocabulary, it appears worthy and interesting to plan a second lesson concerning the presence of Germanisms within Italian vocabulary, in order to these didactic proposals to be consistent with the main topic of this dissertation.

The precedent lesson was designed with the aim of raising awareness about linguistic interferences in secondary school students and, therefore, to stimulate learners toward the discovery of the fact that languages cannot be defined as *pure*, as they present interference phenomena within them, which are considered outcome of the contact with other languages.

In particular, the proposed lesson focused firstly on English influence on Italian vocabulary, evident from the terms included within the text, and, secondly, on interferences from other languages, proved through the following activities. Indeed, the English languages was chosen as it represents an essential and worldwide used means of communication and, therefore, it can be seen as replacement of Latin, which was considered important means of communication in the ancient age, especially at the level of trade and economic exchanges, as it exerted a powerful influence on many languages, as seen in the previous chapter within Old High German vocabulary and syntax.

In this sense, this first lesson can be considered as a brief and general overview about interference phenomena, which could be further developed through a second lesson, more focused on Germanic influence within Italian vocabulary, as follows.

Before delineating the didactic proposal, it is important to suggest that it could and need to be preceded from an historical lesson focused on the presence of Germanic peoples in the Italic territories, so that students could better understand the reason of Germanic linguistic interferences within Italian language, also known as Germanisms. Indeed, from the previous lesson they understood that linguistic interferences appeared within a new linguistic vocabulary for many reasons and, since the two lessons are linked, it appears worthy to present an historical overview before this second lesson, in order to contextualize Germanisms within the linguistic area of the Italic peninsula, delineating the historic phenomena of contact with the Germanic peoples to whom the linguistic superstratum is due.

Therefore, as the precedent one, this second didactic proposal begins with a motivational phase, in which students recall their previous knowledge about the topic it was going to be developed.

In order to do that, I ask them to recap the precedent lesson about interference phenomena and I wrote on the blackboard what they say. I expect that they firstly remember that languages are not pure, as

they contain linguistic interferences, due to the contact that every language establishes with other languages. Secondly, they should also remember that today the language that influences the most Italian is English, as evidenced from the analyzed borrowings. Moreover, they should also tell me that English is not the only language that influences Italian vocabulary and that there are many reasons behind the presence of these interference phenomena.

From the precedent lesson they will also remember that there are different types of borrowings, that is borrowings which became part of the Italian language preserving their form and meaning, as the words analyzed and present within the first text of the lesson, and borrowings that preserved their meaning but partially changed their form, as the words proposed in the interactive game Kahoot!, where students should guess the origin of words.

Once they have mentioned that, we could briefly recap the historical lesson, which I expect it has concerned Barbarian invasions, the fall of the Roman Empire, and the consequent migration of Goths and Langobards to the Italian peninsula.

On the basis of what we said during the first lesson concerning linguistic interferences and their cause, they should be aware of the fact that these migrations, consequently, left visible traces in the Italian language.

Once they have understood and recalled that, I present the text we will focus our lesson on, which will be part of the gathering phase. I ask them to read it and to understand its meaning.

*Lo sguattero graffiò per scherno la guancia di uno sgherro seduto  
sulla panca presso lo scranno nella stamberga.*

G. Dossena, in "Venerdì", supplemento a *La Repubblica*, 5 marzo 1999

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I imagine they do not know some words, as 'sgherro' (henchman), 'scranno' (chair), and 'stamberga' (hovel). Maybe they neither know what 'per scherno' means, that is 'for scorn'.

To help them understand the meaning of these words, I ask them to complete a combination activity, where they have to connect the images to their correspondent word and meaning, as follows:

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<sup>51</sup> English translation: The scullery boy scratched for scorn the cheek of a henchman seated on a bench near the chair in the hovel.





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Then, after having understood the meaning of the text, I ask them to divide each member of the sentence as in the logical analysis, that is identifying subject, verb, object, etc., which will be part of the analysis phase.

Later, I propose a deeper analysis of the text, focusing of words. Before presenting the activity, they will carry out, I ask them what language this is and if they could guess the origin of these words. Probably they will say that these are ancient Italian words, no more used nowadays, which is the case of 'sgherro' and 'scranno' for example. I do not expect that they already know that these words descend from Germanic.

Then, I ask them to search for the origin of each word present within the text proposed, and we will discuss later about it. Indeed, they will discover that these words are of Germanic origin, although they are part of the Italian vocabulary and not easily recognizable.

Sguattero \_\_\_\_\_

Graffiare \_\_\_\_\_

Scherno \_\_\_\_\_

Guancia \_\_\_\_\_

Sgherro \_\_\_\_\_

Panca \_\_\_\_\_

Scranno \_\_\_\_\_

Stamberga \_\_\_\_\_

In their research, they will also notice that many words changed their meaning in time. Therefore, I ask them also to write it beside the origin of the Italian word.

Indeed, ‘sguattero’ descends from Lombard *wahtari* and originally meant guardian; ‘graffiare’ originates from Lombard *\*krapfo*, which originally designated the hook; ‘scherno’ derives from the Lombard verb *\*skirnjan*, meaning to mock or to trick; ‘sgherro’ derives from Lombard *skarr(j)o*, which originally designated the captain. The word ‘guancia’ represents a particular case, as it descends from Gothic *\*wankja* (OHG *wanga* or *wanka*), which originally meant field, plain. Indeed, the term used to designate the cheek was the same used to designate the mouth, which was Latin *os*, *oris*, or *bucca*, *-ae*. Therefore, since there was not a specific term to indicate the cheek, which can be defined as the plain part within the mouth, the Gothic word *\*wankja* was acquired within the Italian vocabulary.<sup>52</sup>

However, few of these words preserved their original meaning, as ‘panca’, that originates from Lombard *panka*, ‘scranno’ (rarely used, is the masculine form of the word ‘scranna’), which derives from Lombard *skranna*, and ‘stamberga’, which descends from Lombard *\*stainberga*.<sup>53</sup>

Later, we orally discuss the activity in plenum. They will surely notice that, with the exception of ‘guancia’, all these terms are of Lombard origin. Indeed, Lombard represented the most influent layer, among the three layers of Germanisms within the Italian language, that is Gothic, Lombard, and Franconian.<sup>54</sup>

Continuing with the analysis, I ask them how we could denominate these Italian words of Germanic origin. Then, I tell them that they are called Germanisms and, even if with some difficulty, they can be recognized as they have a similar sound. In order to prove that, I pronounce these words aloud and ask them what characteristics they recognize these words could have in common.

They could easily recognize that ‘guancia’ and ‘sguattero’ have a similar sound. Indeed, with sporadic exceptions, every element and word that begin with *gu* + vowel are of Germanic origin, as outcome of the Germanic labiovelar *g<sup>w</sup>*, which underwent the Second Consonant Shift. Moreover, another

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<sup>52</sup> Morlicchio 2000-2016, fasc. 1-9

<sup>53</sup> P. Scardigli, and T. Gervasi 1978. Although the reference is outdated, the present etymological dictionary was used for the research about the origin of all terms here proposed, as it represents an interesting and useful comparative dictionary of Germanic elements common to both English and German language. In particular, this dictionary was employed as it is easy to manage and read also for students, offering a clear and accessible explanation about the origin of words.

<sup>54</sup> At a more advanced level, the teacher could illustrate the Second Consonant Shift and point out the students the changes the language underwent. Evidence of that is the Italian verb ‘graffiare’, which originates from Lombard *\*krapfo*, meaning ‘graffio’. Indeed, according to the High German Consonant Shift, Germanic voiceless stops became fricatives in certain phonetic environments.

criterion to recognize words of Germanic origin is the Italian sound sche- and schi-, evidence of which is the word ‘scherno’<sup>55</sup>.

Once noticed this, I ask them to find, if possible, the period in which the analyzed terms were included within Italian vocabulary and to verify if that period corresponds to the period of Germanic invasion of the Italian peninsula. In this sense, the proposed activity can be linked to the previous historical lesson and students can develop an interdisciplinary competence, finding a connection between the linguistic and the historical themes proposed in class.

Indeed, as already stated, interferences phenomena are tightly linked to language contact, which is, in turn, due to the contacts established between populations speaking different languages. Therefore, when searching for the origin of words or borrowings, in this case of Germanisms, it is worthy to also know the historical time period in which these words were acquired within that specific vocabulary and the reasons that lay behind such acquisition. And students should be aware of that, as it is part of the history of their linguistic patrimony.

For what concerns the final phase of the lesson, which is the synthesis phase, I request students to conduct a brief research and find other words of Germanic origin, basing it to the considerations we made about Germanisms and the criteria to identify these words. In this sense, they will discover that many words we frequently use and seem of Italian origin, are instead Germanisms. To carry out this research, they can take advantage of the chart proposed in the final activity of the previous lesson, which was modified, as shown below:

PAROLA: \_\_\_\_\_

ORIGINE: la parola \_\_\_\_\_ proviene dal \_\_\_\_\_, che significa \_\_\_\_\_.

La parola è di origine germanica in quanto presenta le seguenti caratteristiche: \_\_\_\_\_

PERIODO: entra nel lessico italiano nel \_\_\_\_\_, perché \_\_\_\_\_

(MOTIVO: commercio, necessità, vicinanza con la lingua d’origine, non c’era una parola italiana per indicare quell’oggetto...).

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<sup>55</sup> Pfister 1998, 1107-1150. General criteria used to recognize Germanic elements within the Italian vocabulary were taken into consideration, as the lesson represents a first approach to the identification of Italian words of Germanic origin.

<sup>56</sup> English translation: Word: ... / Origin: the word ... comes from ..., meaning ... / The word has Germanic origin as it has the following characteristics: ... / Period: it became part of the Italian vocabulary in ... because ... (reason: trade / need / proximity to the original form / there was not an Italian word to indicate that object ...)

In conclusion, this lesson can be delivered with the purpose of sensibilize students to the importance of discovering the origin of words. Even when a word seems to have an Italian origin, it can be a Germanism present within the linguistic area of the Italic peninsula. Indeed, Germanisms have permeated the Italian vocabulary since the 5<sup>th</sup> century and are not easily recognizable now. Therefore, it is important to raise students' awareness about this topic, which represents the continuation of the previous lessons, respectively concerning linguistic interference phenomena and Germanic migrations and invasions, being linked to them.

Moreover, this lesson was projected as it constitutes a didactic proposal consistent with the main topic of this dissertation. Indeed, it analyses through didactic activities the opposite phenomenon regarding the theme of the present work: whether the thesis focuses on the analysis of Latin interferences within Old High German vocabulary and syntax, the present lesson deals with Germanisms, or rather with Germanic interferences, within Italian vocabulary.

In this sense, it can be affirmed that in the present dissertation linguistic interference phenomena were analyzed and seen from two opposite and different perspectives, but both dealing with the reciprocal influence exerted between the Germanic peoples and the Romans.

However, in this second lesson specific terms and linguistic denomination to describe interference phenomena and Germanisms were avoided, since secondary school students have not sufficient knowledge to understand and deal with such a complicated topic. Therefore, the proposed lesson represents only a brief overview concerning Germanisms within Italian language, with the final purpose of raising students' awareness about interference phenomena within the Italian language, and in particular, interference phenomena deriving from Germanic influence.

## CONCLUSIONS

This thesis is devoted to the study of linguistic interference phenomena deriving from the contact between the Germanic peoples and the Romans, which led its traces within their respective vocabularies. Therefore, this objective was achieved firstly through the diachronic analysis of Latin borrowings within Old High German vocabulary and syntax and, secondly, through the proposal of didactic activities, making the thesis consistent with the language teaching aim of the thesis.

First of all, the dissertation introduced the notion of German language, which cannot be defined as unique, because it changes depending on the purposes and the psychological impulses of individuals and groups of speakers, as well as on geographical, cultural, religious, and political factors (Foschi Albert and Hepp 2003, 3). Indeed, as every language, German is articulated in many varieties and changed over time.

Its history can be summarized in six phases, the first of which can be referred to as Old High German. From evidence given by the high presence of borrowings within Old High German, it appears clear that the language that influences the most the first phase of German language's development was Latin. Therefore, before analyzing Latin borrowings within Old High German, it was worthy to understand the reasons lying under their acquisition, considering historical events and their related linguistic implications.

With this purpose, the linguistic contacts between the Germanic peoples and the Romans were investigated, considering three period of Latin influence, which can be described as follows.

The first period concerned the first contacts established between the two populations and their linguistic relationship between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> century, which based on trade, and the Latin vocabulary that became part of the Old High German linguistic patrimony comprehended almost exclusively loanwords related to their needs. Moreover, in this period the Roman culture permeated in the Germanic world with new terms and expressions related to a new concept and area of living, such as agriculture, pomiculture, viniculture, farming, building, and clothing, and Old High German included these new borrowed terms within its vocabulary.

The second period of influence lasted from the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> century and concerned the diffusion of Christianity and the Christianization of the Germanic peoples, which was defined as a shrinkage and caused profound linguistic changes. Indeed, it was characterized by a slow decline of the pagan vocabulary and the introduction of new terms, items, and institutions. New types of borrowing began to be acquired within Old High German vocabulary and Christianity contributed also to the introduction of the written culture.

Finally, the third period of influence, between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> century, was characterized by the development of monasteries and their related area of linguistic influence. Monasteries were responsible to the enhancement of national education and their cultural demanding impact concerned the introduction of pomiculture and horticulture, just as the spread of new techniques in the medical and the learning field.

From the diachronic analysis of Latin borrowings within Old High German vocabulary emerged that Latin influence was linked to the German speech community's need to develop interpersonal and communicative skills in order to express itself in different situations and for different purposes in the three periods of influence analyzed. Indeed, borrowings are generally considered to be tied to extra linguistic factors: cultural relationships, economic exchanges, military invasions, and, therefore, the easier and more frequent is the passage from a language to another, the tighter are the relationships between populations speaking those languages (Zolli 1976, 1).

After an analysis of Latin interference phenomena within Old High German vocabulary, the thesis investigated the presence of Latin interference phenomena within Old High German syntax. Therefore, two Latin translations were taken into analysis and served as a proof that Latin influence had an impact on almost all linguistic levels of the German language in the Old High German period. Indeed, as a result of the relationships established between the Romans and the Germanic peoples and in light of the enumerated borrowings and examples, Old High German represents the product of these interactions since within it there is clear evidence of lexical, semantic, and syntactical interferences from Latin.

However, the innovative aspect of this thesis concerns its final and fourth chapter, which deals with linguistic interferences from a language teaching perspective, focusing in particular on the acquisition of second and foreign languages and its consequences on learners, which is relevant for teachers, as they embody the facilitators that offer support and advice when needed from learners.

Indeed, from the studies concerning interference phenomena, it is revealed a representation of the linguistic reality which can't get along with the sketchiness with whom many researchers work in this area of research.

For this reason, this thesis fills a gap in our knowledge by analyzing didactic tools to study interference phenomena, namely Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Error Analysis, which have been considered of great relevance as they can represent an aid for teachers to understand and manage those interferences which constitute a problem for learners. Although these issues can be rather considered as an opportunity to learn and acquire second or foreign languages, Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Error Analysis were not applied within the second didactic proposal as it represented a hypothetical following lesson that was not delivered to students.

Moreover, it represents an innovation by planning and delivering a didactic workshop raising students' awareness about interference phenomena within the Italian language.

The didactic workshop was divided into two lessons, the first of which was delivered to a second class attending the secondary school "A. De Gasperi" in Colceresa (VI), and the second was considered as a hypothetical lesson to be delivered later.

Whether the first lesson aimed to raise students' awareness about the fact that languages are not pure but contains mixing phenomena deriving from the contact with other languages, considering particular the influence of English nowadays, and investigated the presence of linguistic interferences within Italian vocabulary as product of such contacts, the second lesson analyzed through didactic activities the opposite phenomenon regarding the theme of the present work. Indeed, whether the thesis focused on the analysis of Latin interferences within Old High German vocabulary and syntax, the present lesson dealt with the presence of Germanisms, or rather with Germanic interferences, within Italian vocabulary.

In this sense, in conclusion it can be affirmed that the present dissertation analyzed linguistic interference phenomena from two opposite and different perspectives, but both dealing with the reciprocal influence exerted between the Germanic peoples and the Romans, opening new research perspectives in the educational field, as it represented an interesting starting point for the planning of other didactic activities that aim to stimulating students' awareness about the presence of interference phenomena within their mother tongue.



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